

Albrecht Classen (Ed.)

**Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages
and Early Modern Age**

Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture



Edited by
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

Volume 15

Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

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Albrecht Classen

DE GRUYTER

ISBN 978-3-11-036087-5
e-ISBN 978-3-11-036164-3
ISSN 1864-3396

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2014 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston
Typesetting: Johanna Boy, Brennbeg
Printing and binding: CPI buch bücher GmbH, Birkach
∞ Printed on acid-free paper
Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

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Albrecht Classen (The University of Arizona, Tucson)

Introduction

Mental and Physical Health, Spirituality and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Medieval Answers for Our Future? With Special Emphasis on Spiritual Healing Through Narratives of Mourning: Johannes of Tepl and Christine de Pizan

I Mental Health and Physical Health: A Universal Question— The Role of Literature as a Narrative Medium

In this introductory paper my original intention was only to examine the meaning and interconnectedness of mental and physical health, spirituality, and religion in the case of two late medieval poems, one in German, the other in French. The purpose was hence to explicate the fundamental role which literature can or must play in people's quest to transcend the material limitations of their existence, both in the past and in the present, with mental health, above all, as a complex issue hovering between sanity and insanity, rationality and irrationality. In the course of my investigations, however, I realized that I had to take a broader approach and had to include many different literary examples and other narratives from the pre-modern era in order to comprehend the profound importance of human experiences both past and present in the interaction between body and mind.

I have not dismissed the two important voices in the course of the subsequent investigations, but I have embedded their messages in the broader medieval and also psycho-medical context, as far as we can conceive of it today. Specifically, our analysis will expose how much literature can provide access to, a concept of, and avenues into the world of human emotions, conflicts, tensions, stress, and worries, and how much the literary text, if not all narratives, offers a springboard for the metaphysical dimension of human life. The examination of 'fictional' narratives easily proves to be a kind of intellectual and mental laboratory for the study of people's mind-sets, feelings, urges, needs, and desires, and we are then provided with the opportunity to reflect on how those inner aspects were communicated or not. This then allows us to recognize the literary discourse from all times and all cultures as a medium for the rediscovery of what constitutes human life in its historical context.

The present study also intends to reveal how much current medical research (often labeled alternative or integrative medicine, which is, however, not really

the same) appears to be ready to engage in a dialogue with the Humanities, that is, with the countless literary and spiritual voices from the past that have already addressed many of the issues that currently appear to be of greatest importance for human health, since physical phenomena never stand all by themselves and must always be understood in the broader framework of body and mind. We could also probe to what extent medieval medication or medical practices could be of service for us today as a kind of alternative to modern approaches, but this volume will focus mostly on spiritual and metaphysical aspects.

Mental illness, for instance, cannot simply be viewed from a medical or pharmaceutical perspective; instead it also needs to be studied in light of a possibly religious aitiology (etiology). Religious phenomena, by the same token, need to be studied in light of what we know about the history of medicine, and they should also be framed by a reflection on the contemporary literary discourse. The visual arts and music have much to do with physical and mental health and should not be ignored in the medical practice, even though the specific connections continue to be rather opaque and elusive.

After all, the experience of the *numinosum* is one we would call apophatic, hence non-translatable into concrete terms of the worldly language. In poetry, however, and in many other kinds of genres, rests the key for a profound understanding of the other dimension that truly determines existence beyond the bodily limitations. Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and his *Sonnets to Orpheus* might be the best modern examples for this phenomenon,¹ while Mechthild von Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Julian of Norwich, to mention just three of the most famous medieval mystical female writers and poets, illustrated the same issue from their own perspective, experimenting with the metaphysical strategy of transcending the bodily constraints in the effort to reach out to the Godhead.

The case of the Dominican preacher and theologian, philosopher and mystic (?) Meister Eckart (ca. 1250–1327), with his constant quest for a full understanding of the relationship between self and God, as the apophatic entity *sui generis*, ultimately incomprehensible by human rationality, also comes into play here because, as he formulates in one of his sermons: “To ascend to the reason, to submit to it, is to be united with God. To be united, to be one, is to be one with God.”² In another

¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. Leslie Norris and Alan Keele. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture, 42 (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1989); id., *The Duino Elegies*, trans. Leslie Norris and Alan Keele. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993).

² *Sermo* XXIX, n. 304, LW IV, 270, 4–6: “Ascendere igitur ad intellectum, subdi ipsi, est uniri deo. Uniri, unum esse, est unum cum deo esse.” Here quoted from Karl Albert, “Epilogue: Meister Eckhart – Between Mysticism and Philosophy,” *A Companion to Meister Eckhart*, ed. Jeremiah

of his German sermons Eckhart posited, reemphasizing a mystical dimension to his theological philosophy, “There is a power in the soul which removes that which is roughest and is united in God: this is the spark in the soul. (With it) my soul is united to God more closely than a good in my body.”³

As these and other passages clearly indicate, this famous but at the end highly contested German thinker, who has had a tremendous influence both on his contemporaries and posterity until the twenty-first century, explored for himself already essential vehicles to overcome the limitations of physical existence and to reach a mystical union with the creator God, thus establishing a new form of mental health, as the result of a profound liberation from all traditional bonds in human life.

Intriguingly, as Karl Albert alerts us, Friedrich Nietzsche confirmed both in his *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* and in his *Zarathustra* that the ultimate goal of all philosophizing consists of realizing the *intuitio mystica*.⁴ But not only that, we would have to trace the history of spirituality at least as far back as to St. Augustine (354–430), who, in his *Confessiones*, struggled hard to come to terms with the concepts of interiority and self in a spiritual and also metaphysical sense. In his prayer, “Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam

M. Hackett. Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, 36 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 699–709; here 706.

3 Pr. 208, DW I, 331, 9–11: “einkraft ist in der sêle, diu spaltet abe daz gröbeste und wirt vereinet in got: daz ist das vünkelîn der sêle. Noch einer wirt mîn sêle mit got dan diu spîse in mînem libe.” Quoted from Albert, “Epilogue” (see note 2), 706–07.

4 Albert, “Epilogue” (see note 2), 708–09; see also his *Mystik und Philosophie*. Richarz-Philosophie (Sankt Augustin: Richarz, 1986); id., *Einführung in die philosophische Mystik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996). The whole issue, as it pertains to modern philosophy and linguistics, is intensively debated; see, for instance, the contributions to *In Search of Meaning: Ludwig Wittgenstein on Ethics, Mysticism and Religion*, ed. Ulrich Arnswald. Europäische Kultur und Ideengeschichte, Studien, 1 (Karlsruhe: Universitäts-Verlag Karlsruhe, 2009); see also Henry Clark, *The Ethical Mysticism of Albert Schweitzer: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Schweitzer’s Philosophy of Civilization*. With 2 essays by Albert Schweitzer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962); Alexander Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969); Anthony J. Steinbock, *Phenomenology and Mysticism: The Verticality of Religious Experience*. Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007). The relationship between philosophy and mysticism is also explored in many other areas, especially Islam and Judaism; see, for instance, Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi’s Kuzari*. SUNY Series in Jewish Philosophy (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); Richard M. Frank, *Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism in Medieval Islam*. Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalām, 1 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

nova, sero te amavi! et ecce intus erat et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam” (*Confessiones* X, 38), this Church Father realized most intriguingly that the differences between inside and outside, up and down, are only relative categories since the depth of the soul and the height of the Godhead are, in a way, the same.⁵ As he powerfully realized, and as countless other Catholic writers have commented subsequent to him – here not disregarding the infinite number of other spiritual thinkers among Muslims, Jews, Hindus, or Buddhists –

You were with me, but I was not with you. They kept me far from you, those fair things which, If they were not in you, would not exist at all. You have called to me, and have cried out, and have shattered my deafness. You have blazed forth with light, and have shone upon me, and you have put my blindness to flight. You have sent forth fragrance, and I have drawn in my breath, and I put after you. I have tasted you, and I hunger and thirst after you. You have touched me, and I have burned for your peace.⁶

From here we could easily turn to the entire and huge corpus of medieval and early modern texts, both secular and religious, where the writers, in a myriad of fashions, have explored this very topic on their own, always probing how the dimension of spirituality could be connected with the physical existence, since the latter always seems to be just a screen, or mask, for what is to become in the afterlife.⁷

5 Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Brian Stock, *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text. Material Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); here I have drawn from Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, “Bilder in der Kirche, im Herzen oder gar nirgends?,” *Die Aktualität der Vormoderne: Epochenentwürfe zwischen Alterität und Kontinuität*, ed. Klaus Ridder and Steffen Patzold. Europa im Mittelalter, 23 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 19–43; here 34–35.

6 *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans., with an Intro. and Notes, by John K. Ryan (New York, London, et al.: Image Books, Doubleday, 1960), Book X, ch. 27, 38, pp. 254–55. For the Latin original, see Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. I: *Introduction and Text*, ed. James J. O'Donnell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 134. For a good textual commentary of this important, often quoted passage, see James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*, vol. III: *Commentary on Books 8–13, Indexes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 196–98. As to the relevance of Augustine for modern readers, see the contributions to *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

7 Joachim Bumke, *Die Blutstropfen im Schnee: Über Wahrnehmung und Erkenntnis im “Parzival” Wolframs von Eschenbach*. Hermaea. Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 94 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001).

Medieval mystical texts, whether by Hildegard of Bingen or by Julian of Norwich, whether by Meister Eckhart – if we can call him a mystic – or by Henry Suso always aimed at the realization of the spiritual dimension whereto the human soul is invited to migrate, called upon by the Godhead in concrete terms.⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, a surprising supporter of that view in the twentieth century, in his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, insisted on the close, if not intimate and essential, correlation between the external and the internal. In other words, true understanding of life as we know it must always combine the physical with the spiritual, otherwise we remain blind in one eye.⁹

For the purpose of this volume, and my own investigations, I do not intend to pursue an approach informed by the History of Mentality, Psycho-History, or Intellectual History, and will also refrain from studying the issue at stake in light of most postmodern approaches to textual analysis because my concern rests in understanding of how the literary discourse was intended as or has facilitated a communicative exchange among people (author-audience/ readers) in their quest for spiritual health in religious or other terms. I will touch often on the history of medicine in the pre-modern world, but again, this book is not about that specifically either. In order to do justice to the large topic or topics at stake, we must take into consideration many different approaches taken by writers/poets and scholars in the Middle Ages and beyond. This makes it impossible at this stage to offer a concise review of the relevant research literature, although I will subsequently draw from many different investigations in many different scholarly and scientific fields in order to elucidate the issue here at stake.

We need fictionality, or the creative employment of human language, art, imagination, and music, as I would like to postulate, in order to come to terms with the ethereal, spiritual, mental, and metaphysical aspects of human existence, often expressed in suffering and pain, feelings of anguish and insecurity,

⁸ Bernard McGinn, “The Language of Inner Experience in Christian Mysticism,” *Spiritus* 1 (2001): 156–71; Gordon Rudy, *Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture, 14 (New York and London: Routledge 2002); Amy Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*. Studies in Spirituality and Theology, 1 (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); eadem, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*. Religion and Postmodernism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁹ B. F. McGuinness, “The Mysticism of the Tractatus,” *Philosophical Review* 75 (1966): 305–28; Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History*. SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 235; Owen C. Thomas, “Interiority and Christian Spirituality,” *Journal of Religion* 80.1 (2000): 41–60; here 50.

and responded to by a literary quest, such as Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, to mention just a few masterpieces that have consistently deeply appealed to audiences throughout the ages. The exploration of the human word and its spiritual power, as realized already in the early Middle Ages when healing was commonly done by means of charms and magical incantation, continues throughout the ages, and still appeals to us today because we know how much assuring, hopeful, confidence-inspiring, and energizing words can achieve in either maintaining our health or in restoring a sick body to health.¹⁰

II Medicine and the Humanities: Religious-Literary Perspectives

Modern medicine is talking about neuro-psychosomatic instruments that can, or must, accompany the medicinal treatment. However, both incantations, prayer, blessing, and the use of religious texts (perhaps even magical words) have consistently demonstrated their astounding effect in dealing with sickness, illness, and worse conditions, in clear contradiction to the modern-day scientific approaches in the medical field.¹¹ As Wolfgang Ernst observes, "Erzählte Ursachen und erzählte Wirkungen werden zusammengelegt und im Heilungsprozess dyna-

10 Brian Stock, "Minds, Bodies, Readers," The Rosenbach Lectures, University of Pennsylvania, 1999, printed in *New Literary History* 37.3 (2006): 489–524; cf. also Kevin A. Barrows and Bradly P. Jacobs, "Mind-Body Medicine: An Introduction and Review of the Literature," *Medical Clinics of North America* 86.1 (2002): 11–31. See now the contribution to this volume by Susanna Niiranen.

11 Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen: Angewandte Psychotherapie im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2011), 9–19; see now also his new study in which he focuses on *Gehirn und Zauberspruch: Archaische und mittelalterliche psychoperformative Heilspruchttexte und ihre natürlichen Wirkkomponenten. Eine interdisziplinäre Studie* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2013), in which he analyzes the correlation between word magic and neurobiological processes in the brain of sick people. He argues that the proper use of words and rituals could create mental images that trigger neuronal activities, which in turn led to the production of immune bodies. In concrete terms he observes that there are two sides of the neuronal system which can be triggered by a charm or, for that matter, a prayer. On the one hand the longitudinal fissure between the medial surfaces of the cerebral hemispheres is activated, where feelings of empathy, pity, and sympathy are located. When the prayer or charm addresses demons, for example, another part of our brain is activated, that is, the lateral and frontal sections (181–82). For a study of late medieval charms and similar word medicine, see Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages*. *Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 270–75.

misiert” (17; narrated causes and narrated effects are brought together and activated in the healing process). Little wonder that many of the medieval saints and preachers (especially Franciscans and Dominicans) were said to have achieved so much in their lives, reaching out to people, teaching, converting, but also helping in practical terms because their consoling, hope-inspiring, trust-building words regularly appear to have struck deep cords. Charms, incantations, and prayers have witnessed a significant popularity throughout the ages, whether they have had any scientifically or medically verifiable effect or not.¹²

The range from quackery to astounding healing powers by old wives, sorcerers, trained medical doctors, and others proves to be expansive and almost infinite, of course, and the extent to which we face here superstition, imagination, fantasy, or truly proven methods and methods of a different kind would be hard to fathom.¹³ Magic, witchcraft, and voodoo, to mention just three of many different areas, have also been evoked regularly throughout times in people’s desperate attempts to regain their health or to prevent their death. The need for wonders, as suspect and mysterious as they might be, continues to be of supreme importance, and this today as much as in the past, whether the belief in them can be trusted or not, whether it makes sense to be a faithful person or not. After all, modern medicine cannot solve all cases or heal all people. Then, however, seemingly miraculous healings happen, after all, and they are often associated with the belief in certain saints, such as St. Damian of Molokai (1889, canonized in 2009) and St. Hildegard of Bingen (1179, canonized in 2012), not to forget St. Brigit of Kildare, Ireland, whose popularity is the topic of the paper by Maedhbh M. Nic Dhonnchadha in this volume.

As much as all those aspects associated with ‘magic’ have been consistently condemned first by the Catholic Church, but then by the universities and the medical profession, the impact of those approaches continues to be felt in many parts of this world, even today.¹⁴ In fact, modern medicine has increasingly realized that the ‘placebo effect’ promises to exert a considerable influence and so cannot be simply dismissed because the faith in the healing power either of any kind of medicine or the healer’s touch has yielded amazing results.¹⁵

12 *The “Liber de diversis medicinis” in the Thornton Manuscript (ms. Lincoln cathedral A. 5. 2.)*, ed. Margaret Sinclair Ogden. Early English Text Society. Original series, 207 (London: Pub. for the Early English text Society by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938).

13 Mary Chamberlain, *Old Wives’ Tales: The History of Remedies, Charms, and Spells* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, England: Tempus Publisher, 2006).

14 Brian P. Levack, *Witchcraft, Healing, and Popular Diseases: New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012).

15 *The Placebo Effect: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, ed. Anne Harrington (Cambridge, MA:

Modern medicine is now seriously talking about spontaneous remission, and the number of reported cases of seemingly or apparently miraculous healing is growing; or rather, we become increasingly aware that healing does not simply happen through a mechanical, chemical, or physical process.¹⁶ As Brian Stock recently remarked with respect to the history of medical research, practice, and magic for healing purposes, “The ancient and medieval practices that are described in standard histories of medicine are of no clinical use today, but the medical research community is deeply involved in the investigation of mind-body relationships that distantly recall miraculous cures, that is, interventions in which a subject apparently inspired by beliefs alone was able to trigger the body’s resources into reversing a potentially threatening condition”¹⁷

Although we might not learn much about physical health in St. Francis of Assisi’s teachings, his heavy emphasis on spirituality and virtues underscores how much he embraced the ideal of giving full attention to the mental aspect of health, which depends on the direct connection with the metaphysical in order to achieve bodily health. As Krijn Pansters remarks, “The capital and many other vices hamper inner reform and the virtuous ascension to perfection, and must therefore be earnestly hated and deplored.”¹⁸ In order to understand this phenomenon, we might have to examine the meaning of neurotheology, a medical approach to religion, and vice versa. As far as we can tell today, individuals who

Harvard University Press, 1999); David A Jopling, *Talking Cures and Placebo Effects. International Perspectives in Philosophy & Psychiatry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

16 Tilden C. Everson and Warren H. Cole, *Spontaneous Regression of Cancer: A Study and Abstract of Reports in the World Medical Literature and of Personal Communications Concerning Spontaneous Regression of Malignant Disease* (Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 1966); Stephan Maurer and Klaus F. Kölmel, *Spontaneous Regression of Malignant Melanoma*, trans. from the German. Cancer Research Institute, New York, NY: Monograph, 19 (New York, NY: Cancer Research Institute, 1997); Herbert Kappauf, *Wunder sind möglich: Spontanheilung bei Krebs* (Freiburg i. Br., Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 2003); id., “Wunder in der Medizin: Wenn ein Krebs plötzlich verschwindet,” *Zeichen und Wunder: Interdisziplinäre Zugänge*, ed. Werner H. Ritter and Michaela Albrecht. Biblisch-theologische Schwerpunkte, 31 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 88–107. See also Anne Van Arsdall, “The Medicines of Medieval and Renaissance Europe as a Dource of Medicines for Today,” *Prospecting for Drugs in Ancient and Medieval European Texts: A Scientific Approach*, ed. Bart K. Holland (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 1996), 19–37. For an enormously useful resource in this regard, see Jörg Mildenerberger, *Anton Trutmanns ‘Arzneibuch*. Part II: *Wörterbuch*. 5 vols. Würzburger medizinhistorische Forschungen, 56.1–5 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1997).

17 Stock, “Minds, Bodies, Readers” (see note 10), 496.

18 Krijn Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue: Spiritual Growth and the Virtues in Franciscan Literature and Instruction of the Thirteenth Century*. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 161 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 182.

undergo a religious epiphany, or have similar experiences, show a noticeable change of neural activities in some areas of the brain which lead to a radical transgression of the time-space boundaries. Such activities can be induced artificially, and have been observed now many times in medical test situations, which all alerts us to the powerful operations going on in the brain connecting the physical with the spiritual dimension.¹⁹

The critical investigation of pre-modern literature specifically allows us to gain a window into past methods and concepts of how to engage with the immaterial dimension of human existence, without necessarily drawing from religious investigations or psychological readings, and thus to speculate on future medical and psychological operations for the healing process of the individual. However, religious texts are never far away from their ‘secular’ counterparts, and it would always be rather difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between both dimensions, especially in the pre-modern world. Poignantly, Albert Einstein (1879–1955) had famously formulated: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”²⁰

We can decry, ridicule, reject, belittle, despise, or simply ignore religion, but throughout history virtually all societies have achieved most of their goals or accomplished enormous tasks because of the collective power which faith, in one or the other manifestation, had provided. That is, if we interpret ‘religion’

19 See the contributions to *Where God and Science Meet: How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter Our Understanding of Religion*, ed. Patrick McNamara. Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality: Praeger Perspectives (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006).

20 Einstein’s comments is quoted many times online and elsewhere. Einstein, Albert, *Cosmic Religion: With Other Opinions and Aphorisms* (New York: Covici-Friede, Inc., 1931), 97. For reflections on the implications for the Humanities at large, see Paul Keen, “‘Imagining What We Know’: The Humanities in a Utilitarian Age,” *Humanities Open Access* (forthcoming). As to the functions and importance of imagination for human creativity and epistemology, see now Nigel J. T. Thomas, “The Multidimensional Spectrum of Imagination: Images, Dreams, Hallucinations, and Active, Imaginative Perception,” *Humanities Open Access* (forthcoming). For medieval perspectives, exploring the interaction between the religious and the secular within the literary framework, see the contributions to *Geistliches in weltlicher und Weltliches in geistlicher Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Christoph Huber, Burghart Wachinger, and Hans-Joachim Ziegeler (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000). A famous example of the intricate interrelationship between the religious and the secular proves to be the *Gregorius* tale, best known through Hartmann von Aue’s Middle High German version (ca. 1190–1200), but there are variants of it in virtually all European languages; see now Brian Murdoch, *Gregorius: An Incestuous Saint in Medieval Europe and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). As to mysticism and rationalism, see Otto Langer, *Christliche Mystik im Mittelalter: Mystik und Rationalisierung – Stationen eines Konflikts* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004).

in a more global fashion and do not limit ourselves to a specific church-based religion, and also include ideology, or simply conviction and idealism, we can comprehend the degree to which most human actions are determined by spiritual forces. After all, ideologies can also be viewed as a kind of religion because they operate on the level of a belief system, or a belief in a metaphysical ideal.²¹

III A Literary Example: Hartmann von Aue's "Der arme Heinrich"

Medieval court poets, such as the troubadours, often identified their feelings of love as a magical healing power, such as Jaufre Rudel (fl. middle of the twelfth century) in his song "Pro ai del chan essenhadors" (Nr. 2): "Bona es l'amors e molt pro vau, / e d'aquest mal mi pot guerir / ses gart de metge sapien" (54–56; "The love is good and has great value, / and of this malady it can cure me / without the care of a learned doctor").²² One of the most dramatic illustrations of the human

21 For examples confirming this observation, though relating to phenomena in the early modern world, see David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). This issue has been discussed already for a long time, especially in the realm of literary history; see F. S. C. Northrop, *Man, Nature, and God: A Quest for Life's Meaning* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962); for critical perspectives regarding blind faith, fundamentalism, and subsequent religious terror, see Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005). Of course, there are also good reasons to suggest that an atheistic society would prosper quite well; see Phil Zuckerman, *Society Without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us About Contentment* (New York: New York University Press, 2008). For the debate on rationalism, see Ulrich O. Sievering, *Kritischer Rationalismus heute* (Frankfurt a. M.: Haag + Herchen, 1988). See also the contributions to *Religiöse Überzeugungen und öffentliche Vernunft: zur Rolle des Christentums in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft*, ed. Franz-Josef Bormann und Bernd Irlenborn. *Quaestiones disputatae*, 228 (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2008). For perspectives regarding the late Middle Ages, see Wolfgang Achtnr, *Vom Erkennen zum Handeln: die Dynamisierung von Mensch und Natur im ausgehenden Mittelalter als Voraussetzung für die Entstehung naturwissenschaftlicher Rationalität. Religion, Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). For modern approaches, see Richard Swinburne, *Glaube und Vernunft. Religion in der Moderne*, 20 (Würzburg: Echter, 2009). The topic is huge, of course, and the relevant research literature is legion. For the most recent comments, see the contributions to *Trends of Secularism in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Jaime Contreras and Rosa María Martínez de Codes (Madrid and Frankfurt a. M.: Iberoamericana / Vervuert, 2013).

22 Quoted from *Troubadour Lyrics: A Bilingual Anthology*, ed. and trans. Frede Jensen. *Studies in the Humanities. Literature–Politics–Society*, 39 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 1998), 120–21. For further studies on this topic, see M. Ciavolella, "Mediaeval Medicine and Ar-

need to gaze into the depth in order to discover oneself, or the spiritual being, can be found in the Middle High German verse narrative *Der arme Heinrich* by Hartmann von Aue (ca. 1190–1200). The leper Heinrich, formerly a rich and much beloved prince, faces certain death, unless, as a medical doctor in Salerno, Italy, has told him, he can find a nubile virgin willing to die for him so that her blood can cure him from his fatal disease.²³ Quite naturally, he considers this to be an impossibility, so he retires to one of his farmers to await his certain death. After some time, the farmer's young daughter falls in love with him – the narrative does not spell this out explicitly, but all the circumstances confirm this observations – and demonstrates her readiness to give up her life for his.

After lengthy debates with her parents and Heinrich, in which she has demonstrated amazing, if not daunting rhetorical skills and a highly precocious mind, almost like a saint, they accept her sacrifice and allow their daughter to travel with the sick knight to Salerno where she would give up her life for his. According to her own words she wants to be married to Christ the Lord, and thus avoid the sinfulness of this life, and in this process she also hopes to save Heinrich from his certain death. Of course, both the previous relationship between Heinrich and the girl – he had called her his 'bride' and had given her as gifts objects such as a girdle and a ring – and her passionate desire to die for him clearly signify her deep but hidden love for the prince, but the vast social difference between them makes her secret desires completely illusory, hence her readiness to accept death instead and thus to be justified in her action through her assumed martyrdom as a virgin.

Just before the doctor is about to cut the girl's heart out while she is still alive, the protagonist hears him sharpening the knife. Strangely driven by curiosity,

cite's Love Sickness," *Florilegium: Papers on Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* 1 (Spring 1979): 222–41; Laine E. Doggett, *Love Cures: Healing and Love Magic in Old French Romance*. Penn State Romance Studies (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

23 See, for instance, François-Olivier Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Âge: la lèpre, les lépreux et les léproseries dans la province ecclésiastique de sens jusqu'au milieu du XIV^e siècle*. Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 11 (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1998); Peter L. Allen, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (2000; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, UK, and Rochester, VT: Boydell Press, 2006); *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. Joshua Eyler (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); Esther Meier, "Die heilende Kraft des Angesichts Christi: Leprakranke und das Schweißstuch der Veronika," *Gesund und krank im Mittelalter: Marburger Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Medizin. 3. Tagung der Arbeitsgruppe 'Marburger Mittelalter-Zentrum (MMZ)' Marburg, 25. und 26. März 2005*, ed. Andreas Meyer and Jürgen Schulz-Grobert (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2007), 125–43. See also Andreas Meyer, "Lepra und Lepragutachten aus dem Lucca des 13. Jahrhunderts," *ibid.*, 145–201.

Heinrich approaches the wall separating him from the young woman and the doctor, and gazes through a hole in the wall, espying her lying nakedly on the operation table.²⁴ Observing her stunning beauty and recognizing her innocence, Heinrich suddenly understands how wrong he had been all along. He experiences, in other words, an epiphany, realizing that the true spiritual beauty, which she represents, rests on the inside, while his external ugliness and imminent death matter little. The spatial arrangement, with the leper being shut out and the farmer's daughter shut in, forces us to read the scene in allegorical terms, with him representing mankind, her representing the spiritual world.

We might consider the farmer's daughter as a symbol of Heinrich's own soul, since he suddenly recovers afterwards and gets well again because God ("speculator cordis") has looked into his heart and has recognized his profound change of mind, or rather of his heart. Subsequently, once having returned home, the two people marry, and happiness returns to their world. As Hartmann clearly signals with this narrative and its unique literary motif, religion, spirituality, and (mental) health prove to be intimately interconnected, especially because the material existence is identified as predicated on the spiritual dimension. True healing is only possible if the affected individual recognizes his/her spiritual illness, which then can finally lead to the physical, medical recovery.²⁵

24 For a discussion of the amatory gaze, especially in correlation with late-medieval optics, see Dana E. Stewart, *The Arrow of Love: Optics, Gender, and Subjectivity in Medieval Love Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 2003); see also A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

25 Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich*, ed. Hermann Paul. 16th, newly rev. ed. by Kurt Gärtner. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 3 (1882; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1996); see also the English translation *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). For recent studies on Hartmann, see *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Francis G. Gentry. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2005). For an excellent commentary, see Hartmann von Aue, *Gregorius, Der arme Heinrich*, ed. and trans. by Volker Mertens. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 6 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2004). See also Birgit A. Jensen, "Transgressing the Body: Leper and Girl in Hartmann von Aue's 'Armer Heinrich'," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 61 (2006): 103–26; for a theological reading, see David Duckworth, *The Leper and the Maiden in Hartmann's Der arme Heinrich*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 627 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996). I have explored the interpretation of the farmer's daughter as Heinrich's soul already previously, Albrecht Classen, "Herz und Seele in Hartmanns von Aue 'Der arme Heinrich.'" *Der mittelalterliche Dichter als Psychologe?*, *Mediaevistik* 14 (2003): 7–30. For the utopian character of this narrative, see my study "Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage Between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in

As we can read in the Canon 11 of the Council of Worms, 1229, “Because doctors of the body wish to help the sick, first they consider the health of their souls.”²⁶ In fact, as recent scholarship has emphasized, a completely rational approach to medical issues commonly misses the point and does not fully achieve the desired goal. David B. Morris goes so far as to describe, and this from a postmodern perspective, the extent to which illness “constitutes a ‘social text’: something at least partly created by the densely interwoven network of experiences and interpretations we bring to it... . Illness, further, is never strictly a matter for theorists but always contains deeply practical imperatives: something must be done, often quickly and with imperfect knowledge.”²⁷

From here we could extend our investigations to Chrétien de Troyes’s *Yvain* or Hartmann von Aue’s *Iwein* where the protagonist loses his sanity and roams the forest almost like a wild beast, living on raw meat, and all that because his wife Laudine had rejected him as her husband as a result of his own forgetfulness and obsession with knighthood. This famous scene has been discussed many times, so for our purposes we only need to investigate what this ‘classical’ medieval text reveals as to the evaluation of insanity and the possibility of recovery from this mental illness. *Iwein* – here I resort only to the Middle High German version for pragmatic reasons, since this ‘translation’ is very close to the Old French one – had simply forgotten about his wife and is hence completely shocked when Laudine’s maid, Lûnete, announces in public that he has badly transgressed his own oath and is no longer recognized as her husband, symbolized by the ring which Laudine requests back from *Iwein* (3193).²⁸

Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue’s *Der arme Heinrich*, Anonymous, ‘Dis ist von dem Heselin,’ Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late-Medieval Popular Poetry,” *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2012), 251–79.

26 P. M. Stell, *Medical Practice in Medieval York*. Borthwick Papers, 90 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1996), 5. See also Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 1. Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen* (see note 11).

27 David B. Morris, *Illness and Culture in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 6.

28 Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein*. 4., überarbeitete Auflage. Text der siebenten Ausgabe von G. F. Benecke, K. Lachmann und L. Wolff. Übersetzung und Nachwort von Thomas Cramer (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001). For a solid English translation, see *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); the number of relevant critical studies on Hartmann and especially on

Instead of fighting for his love, for his social status, and honor, Iwein is so terribly overcome by pain and psychological distress that he removes himself from court, rips off his clothing, and disappears in the forest, a most significant literary metaphor for losing one's mind. The inner self-accusations, the profound feeling of guilt, and the desire for his own death merge and destroy his identity, his cultural self: "er brach sîne sîte und sîne zuht" (3234; he broke with his good custom and his education). Eventually, of course, Iwein recovers and is rescued through the intervention of several people, but especially through a magical salve produced by the fay Feimorgân (3423–39; Morgana).²⁹

However, it takes him some time to figure out who he truly is as he probes intensively his own identity, before he finally manages to return to his own self, or rather, which takes most of the second half of the romance, to reconstitute his self as a knight of the highest rank and esteem. In fact, he assumes at first that he might have been asleep (3510); and then he must struggle for a long time to work through all the necessary steps in reconstituting his mental health, hence himself as a member of courtly society, as a knight, and as a man. As the narrator insightfully comments on Iwein's trouble in figuring himself out after he had awoken: "Alsus was er sîn selbes gast / daz im des sinnes gebrast" (3563–64; Thus he was a stranger to himself because he lacked good senses).

Insanity is not historically conditioned and cannot be recognized as a problem characteristic of only our own day and age. As the example of Yvain or Iwein indicates, already the pre-modern world was fully aware of the medical and psychiatric problem and was quite interested in exploring the meaning and

his Iwein is legion; see, most recently, Ulrich Hoffmann, *Arbeit an der Literatur: zur Mythizität der Artusromane Hartmanns von Aue* (Literatur – Theorie – Geschichte, 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012)); Nina Spangenberg, *Liebe und Ehe in den erzählenden Werken Hartmanns von Aue*. Kultur, Wissenschaft, Literatur, 26 (Frankfurt, M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2012). As to the relationship between Iwein and Laudine, see Elke Zinsmeister, *Literarische Welten : Personenbeziehungen in den Artusromanen Hartmanns von Aue*. Lateres, 6 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2008). For a collection of critical studies of Hartmann, see *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Francis G. Gentry. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005); Christoph Cormeau und Wilhelm Störmer, *Hartmann von Aue: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung*, 3rd. revised ed. with bibliographical additions (1992/93 to 2006) by Thomas Bein. Arbeitsbücher zur Literaturgeschichte (Munich: Beck, 2007). For Chrétien's version, see *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, trans. with an intro. by David Staines (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

²⁹ Jill M. Hebert, *Morgan Le Fay, Shapeshifter*. Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); she does not, however, consider her important function in Chrétien's or Hartmann's work. See also Carolyne Larrington, *King Arthur's Enchantresses: Morgan and Her Sisters in Arthurian Tradition* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 11–13, 40–41.

relevance of insanity versus sanity. In this process they projected a clear separation between external and internal factors, yet, as Hartmann, for instance, suggests, also emphasized that both commonly collaborated to bring about the loss of sanity.³⁰

Both the literary and the religious example, but then also historical cases well known to us from the pre-modern era, confirm that the issue we are dealing with, the tension between body and mind, or the conflict between the interior and the exterior, represents a fundamental concern relevant for the establishment and maintenance of all human existence. The etiology of insanity can be traced to a myriad of causes and conditions, but we can be certain that the line separating soundness of mind from insanity can easily be transgressed and might actually be at many times nothing but an artificial construct on a sliding and very slippery scale.³¹

Another intriguing and for our purposes very insightful example can be found in the corpus of late-medieval Middle High German verse narratives, the *mæren*,³² where an extreme situation of lost love drives the protagonist into a rage, which ultimately makes him lose his mind. In the *Busant* the prince of England falls in love with the princess of France, but she is already selected to marry the “künig

30 We encounter a late medieval example of an insane person in the remarkable case of the papal scribe, the cleric Opicinus de Canistris, active in Avignon during the middle of the fourteenth century. See Richard Salomon, *Opicinus de Canistris: Weltbild und Bekenntnisse eines avignonesischen Klerikers des 14. Jahrhunderts*. 2 vols. Studies of the Warburg Institute, 1 (London: Warburg Institute, 1936); Guy Roux and Muriel Laharie, *Art et folie au Moyen Age: aventures et énigmes d'Opicinus de Canistris (1296–vers 1351)* (Paris: Léopard d'or, 1997); id., *Opicinus de Canistris (1296–1352?): Prêtre, pape et Christ ressuscité* (Paris: le Léopard d'or, 2005); Klaus Oschema, “Ego Europa – die Zukunft eines Kontinents und der Untergang der Welt,” *Die Aktualität der Vormoderne* (see note 5), 341–72; here 361–66.

31 Henri Hubert Beck, *Waanzin in de middeleeuwen: beeld van de gestoorde en bemoeienis met de zieke* (Hoofddorp: Septuaginta in opdr. van ICOB, 1974); Judith S. Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: Insanity in the Middle Ages and the Twentieth Century* (1975; New York: Octagon Books, 1978); Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Wendy Turner, *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom. Later Medieval Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). See also Elizabeth W. Mellyn, *Mad Tuscans and Their Families: A History of Mental Disorder in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

32 For a fast introduction, and the essential bibliography on this genre, see *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany*. Selected and trans. by Albrecht Classen. Sec. ed. rev. and expanded. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 328 (2007; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009)

von Marroch" (543; the King of Morocco).³³ The two young people succeed in running away to elope, but while they rest in a meadow, and she is sleeping, he is studying two rings that he had taken from her finger. A busard suddenly steals the ring and flies away, and the young prince in vain tries to recapture the ring. However, he then does not find his way back and despairs over the loss of his beloved. The enormous rage in his mind creates so much energy that he falls into insanity, rips off his clothing, and then roams the forest, running both on his arms and legs – very similar to Hartmann's *Iwein*. The princess finds rescue with a miller, and is later recognized by the local duchess as a worthy noble young lady, so she takes her to the court. The young man, by contrast, fully turns into a wild creature and is finally captured by hunters. The duke feels sympathy for him and orders that this wild being receive good treatment for a long time until food, bath, care, and clothing finally help him to recover not only his original body, but also his mind (820–22). Nevertheless, at some point, while he and his companions are hunting with a falcon, they catch another (if not the same) busard, which the young man bestially rips apart:

Dem bûsant er daz houb(e)t abe beiz.
hût unde vleisch er im abe reiz.
Gebein' und daz gevidere
das warf er von im nidere. (847–50)

[He bit off the busard's head.
He ripped off its skin and flesh.
The bones and the feathers
he threw to the ground.]

The bystanders are afraid that he has lost his mind again and take him back to court, but there he is invited to explain his behavior, which then leads to a full narrative about how he lost his beloved, and since the latter happens to be in the audience, the two reunite, and the story quickly comes to its happy end.³⁴

³³ Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Gesamtabenteuer: Hundert altdeutsche Erzählungen*, vol. 1 (1850; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), no. XVI, 331–66. The narrative has survived in complete form in two and in fragmentary form in two other manuscripts; see <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/1709> (last accessed on July 15, 2013).

³⁴ Armin Schulz, "Dem bûsanter daz hout abe beiz: Eine anthropologisch-poetologische Lektüre des 'Busant'," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (PBB) 122 (2000): 432–54; Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Märe – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), 34, 157, 159–61, 167, 169–70; Sandra Linden, "Erzählen als Therapeutikum? Der wahnsinnige Königssohn im 'Bussard'," *Texte zum Sprechen bringen: Philologie und Interpretation: Festschrift für Paul*

The power of love regularly overcomes social constraints, or it builds new cultural, linguistic, and even religious bridges, as is often described in the *Chansons de geste*, especially in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Willehalm*.³⁵ But an obsession with love, misguided approaches to love, and rejection of a lover can prove to be highly destructive and undermine a person's identity and selfhood, as we observed in *Iwein*, and as is also the case in the verse narrative *Der Busant*. Globally speaking, Michel Foucault claimed that "In the Middle Ages and until the Renaissance, man's dispute with madness was a dramatic debate in which he confronted the secret powers of the world; the experience of madness was clouded by images of the Fall and the Will of God, of the Beast and the Metamorphosis, and of all the marvelous secrets of Knowledge."³⁶ Undoubtedly, this is formulated in a brilliant fashion, yet we cannot fully trust Foucault in his historical awareness of madness in the Middle Ages, as countless examples will subsequently illustrate, as when he states:

Because it symbolized a great disquiet, suddenly dawning on the horizon of European culture at the end of the Middle Ages

Madness and the madman become major figures in their ambiguity: menace and mockery, the dizzying unreason of the world, and the feeble ridicule of men (13).

When he then opines, "Then in the last years of the century this enormous uneasiness turns on itself; the mockery of madness replaces death and its solemnity" (15), we might have to question seriously the validity of his investigations, especially in light of the few literary examples quoted above. After all, in *Der Busant* the young man's suffering is not embedded into a larger anthropological, psychological, or theological context; his insanity is the simple result of his despair since he failed in protecting his beloved on their escape. Similarly, when Marie de France describes the 'werewolf' in her *lai Bisclavret*, the monstrous shape is plainly accepted as a transitory stage in the protagonist's life, even though his wife cannot tolerate it and ensures that her husband disappears from the courtly world. His lycanthropy can, in a way, also be described as a form of insanity,

Sappler, ed. Christiane Ackermann and Ulrich Barton, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2009), 171–82; see von der Hagen (see note 33), vol. 1, 331–66, here vv. 605–17, 769–82.

35 Burghart Wachinger, "Religionsgespräche in Erzählungen des Mittelalters," *Die Aktualität der Vormoderne* (see note 5), 295–315; cf. also the contributions to *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 15 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

36 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. from the French by Richard Howard (1961; New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), xii.

from which Bisclavret finally recovers because he receives his clothing back.³⁷ This would make very good sense if we consider how much his wife reacts with horror when she learns the truth about his shape shifting for three days a week.

Altogether, if we disregard Foucault's historical framework for his study on madness, we might be able to agree with him at least to some extent: "In the thought of the Middle Ages, the legions of animals, named once and for all by Adam, symbolically bear the values of humanity. But at the beginning of the Renaissance, the relations with animality are reversed; the beast is set free; it escapes the world of legend and moral illustration to acquire a fantastic nature of its own" (21). This would be true, however, already for the late twelfth century – if not much earlier – when Marie de France, for instance, composed her *Bisclavret*, and it also applies to the Yvan/Iwein figure and the young prince in *Der Busant*, to name just three famous insane people on the literary stage. Ultimately, if we dare to go one step further, the entire world of mystical visions seems to border strangely close to the dimension of insanity, and yet just there, final, absolute truth seems to hover – a topic that would require a book-length study that I must postpone here for many obvious reasons.

It deserves mention, however, that the more researchers investigate social conditions associated with madness and mental disorders, hence also with their professional treatment, we recognize how much the assumptions about the rise of the absolutist state also in the field of health care, at least in the way as Foucault tried to explain it, have to be relativized and corrected. Elizabeth W. Mellyn, for instance, offers intriguing perspectives with regard to the situation in early modern Tuscany: "By the end of the seventeenth century, Tuscans, like other Europeans, had come to explain madness in medical terms and the mentally disordered were beginning to move from households to hospitals. In *Mad Tuscans and Their Families*, Mellyn argues against the commonly held belief that these changes chart the rise of mechanisms of social control by emerging absolutist states. Rather, the story of mental illness is one of false starts, expedients, compromise, and consensus created by a wide range of historical actors."³⁸

37 Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "Marie de France's *Lais* and *Fables*," *A Companion to Marie de France*, ed. Logan E. Whalen. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 27 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) 156–85; here 177–78. See also Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 68–75. But neither here nor in other previous research on Marie has there ever been any remark on the true meaning of Bisclavret's lycanthropy, which I would here read as a form of temporary insanity.

38 Mellyn, *Mad Tuscans and Their Families* (see note 31); here quoted from the Spring 2014 cata-

IV Illness and Mentality: The Epistemic Status of Religion – Medicine and Illness from a Spiritual Perspective

This medieval and by now also post-modern concept might be worth reflecting on in a variety of contexts, when integrative medicine has made great progress in finding spiritual means to initiate the healing of the sick body. Spiritual healing, palliative medicine, and the search for physical health by way of religion, for instance, are the postmodern responses to medieval insights and teachings, although it remains still an open-ended question to what extent modern medicine has fully grasped or embraced the insights developed in earlier ages. This is not to say that medieval medicine was more advanced than modern medicine – the very opposite is certainly the case in most respects. However, medieval medical discourse pursued health in different ways than we have learned to do, and some of those, relying, for instance, on bleeding as a regular method of health care or treatment of the sick, have proven to be rather absurd and dangerous, especially if applied excessively. But the critical point in this regard is not at all whether medieval medicine could provide us with important alternatives for modern medical issues. Instead, our goal can and must be to understand the meaning of illness or sickness as an epistemological challenge, as medieval thinkers strongly argued. The medical etiology must be combined, as most pre-modern practitioners would have suggested, with spiritual insights, or, to use modern terms, to combine pathology with gnoseology, and religion/spirituality with holistic medical treatment.

As ancient writers inform us, the blind, such as Teiresias, were graced with vision and often possessed more clairvoyance than those who could see. Perhaps not surprisingly, certain sicknesses or medical problems emerged in large numbers (epidemic) at certain times. For instance, melancholy became the typical, that is, most discussed and examined ailment of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And the famous cultural historian Egon Friedell (1878–1938), drawing from insights by the Danish historian Troels Frederik Troels-Lund (1840–1921), went even so far as to identify specific illnesses as organic entities that come and go, grow and disappear again, such as the Black Death. That epidemic, however, was not, as he saw it, instrumental in bringing about the early modern age, but curiously its very consequence.³⁹

logue of the University of Pennsylvania Press, 19. I could not yet access this book because of the late publication date.

³⁹ Werner Heinz, “‘Ignorenz der doktoren, welch sie ums leben gebracht ...’: Medizin und Hygiene im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein*

Other methods, deeply steeped in the Christian religion, spirituality, and also ancient folkloric wisdom drawing from herbal studies, might contain important lessons for us again, particularly in our over-rationalized and over-technologized world when we look for innovative or ancient ways of health-care.⁴⁰ We might also question whether alternative and integrative medicine has even recognized the profound relationship between body and mind as already explored in the Middle Ages, and then perhaps even much more spiritualized than today. Esther M. Sternberg has suggested, for instance, that stress can be mediated by a change of location and by searching for special sites where the human soul can heal itself.⁴¹ I cannot probe here what the relationship might be between neuro-medicine and spiritual health, hence also physical well-being, but recent research has clearly pointed out how much those aspects need to be considered for more advanced and more effective healing processes, laying the foundation for true integrative medicine (to distinguish it clearly from alternative medicine).⁴²

philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 251–79. As to Teiresias, see the excellent article online: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiresias> (last accessed on Nov. 13, 2013). Jochen Hörisch, “Epochen/Krankheiten: Das pathognostische Wissen der Literatur,” *Epochen/Krankheiten: Konstellationen von Literatur und Pathologie*, ed. Frank Degler and Christian Kohlroß. Das Wissen der Literatur, 1 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2006), 21–44. Cf. also Susan Sontag’s famous but provocative study, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978); Monica Greco, *Illness as a Work of Thought: A Foucauldian Perspective on Psychosomatics*. International Library of Sociology (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). For a discussion of Friedell, see Wolfgang Bongers, “Anatomisches denken: Sebald, Rembrandt und Hierro,” *Epochen/Krankheiten*, 57–76; cf. also see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egon_Friedell. As to the contributions of Troels-Lund, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troels_Frederik_Lund (both last accessed on Nov. 13, 2013). For the discourse on illness in philosophical and diatectic terms in antiquity and the Middle Ages, see Reinhold F. Glei, “Krankheit dichten: Kranker Mensch und kranke Natur im lateinischen Lehrgedicht,” *Krankheit schreiben: Aufzeichnungsverfahren in Medizin und Literatur*, ed. Yovonne Wübben and Carsten Zelle (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 325–47.

⁴⁰ In another context, focusing on the discourse of medicine and health in the early modern age, I have already reflected intensively on this topic, Albrecht Classen, “Einleitung,” *Religion und Gesundheit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. id. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 1–48.

⁴¹ Esther M. Sternberg, *Healing Spaces: The Science of Place and Well-Being* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁴² *Neural and Neuroendocrine Mechanisms in Host Defense and Autoimmunity*, ed. C. Jane Welsh, Mary W. Meagher, Esther M. Sternberg (Boston, MA: Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, 2006). Paul Offit, *Do you Believe in Magic?: The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine* (New York: Harper, 2013).

Some new evidence even indicates that prayer, or similar forms of verbal ritual with a religious connotation, might affect a sick person deeply and could be of considerable effect.⁴³ However, the risk of abuse, self-illusion, intentional misleading, manipulation, and hence critical endangerment of the sick must also not be underestimated, as numerous examples have documented, which subsequently ended up in the courts.⁴⁴ There are many today who suddenly turn to the healing methods practiced by Native American Indians, or any other non-Western people, hoping to discover miraculous healing which scientific methods, or pharmacy, cannot achieve.⁴⁵ Curiously, the more modern medicine and pharmacy ‘progress,’ the more individuals also look for alternatives, distrustful of traditionally rational approaches that have either not solved the issue or have come with damaging side-effects. ‘Positive psychology’ represents, in other words, a significant, new concept in all matters medicine.⁴⁶

To what extent, if at all, or why in the first place spirituality and/or religion can truly be regarded as noteworthy healing instruments or forces, especially in hopeless medical cases, continues to baffle both the medical experts and to intrigue the faithful, but until today we can only take the middle ground and try to integrate as many different methods and healing strategies as possible, without being dogmatic or absolutist for one or the other side.⁴⁷ In fact, we might currently be in the midst of a paradigm shift, with evidence pointing both ways, toward science and toward spirituality, but we probably can no longer rely exclusively on the traditional concept as taught in the medical schools because alternative medicine represents a very experimental that in some of its iterations shows benefit, but that depends very much on individual convictions, attitudes,

43 Candy Gunther Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

44 Shawn Francis Peters, *When Prayer Fails: Faith Healing, Children, and the Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

45 Gerald Hausman, *Meditations with the Navajo: Prayer-Songs and Stories of Healing and Harmony* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company, 1987).

46 *The Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology*, ed. Shane J. Lopez (Chichester, UK, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publisher, 2009). See also *Researching Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, ed. Jon Adams (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Claire Hoertz Badaracco, *Prescribing Faith: Medicine, Media, and Religion in American Culture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). For a critical perspective, grounded in solid scepticism, see Richard P. Sloan, *Blind Faith: The Unholy Alliance of Religion and Medicine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

47 David Aldridge, *Health, the Individual, and Integrated Medicine: Revisiting an Aesthetic of Health Care* (London and New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004). See also the fascinating interdisciplinary study by Wolfgang Ernst, *Gehirn und Zauberspruch* (see note 11), who explores the interaction between language and healing powers triggered by the brain.

mentality, ideology, and value systems, and appears to achieve sometimes almost miraculous effects.⁴⁸

V The Royal Aura and Charisma: The *Toucher Royal*

One significant example of how much aura and charisma were regarded, apparently quite effectively, as the gateways for miraculous healing during the Middle Ages pertains to the role of the French king, but others as well. In France we observe throughout the entire medieval period the strong conviction that a newly crowned king could achieve healing by touching the sick, *le toucher royale*, or thaumaturgical power.⁴⁹ After the coronation in Rheims, the king was supposed to travel to Corbény, where the relics of Saint Marculf were held since the time of the Norman invasions. Those relics were supposed to grant the king the strength to heal the mortally ill. Guibert of Nogent was the first to report about this miraculous phenomenon in his *De pignoribus sanctorum* (ca. 1124), reporting how King Louis VI (1108–1137) touched the throat of the sick and made the sign of the cross over them, which led, as we are presumed to believe, to their recovery in a spiritual manner.

In the subsequent centuries the belief in this spiritual experience intensified, and the ceremony itself was continuously practiced until 1789. After the French Revolution, King Charles X tried to revive this tradition in 1825, but we do not know what success he might have had. The ‘rationale’ behind this belief system

⁴⁸ *Religion und Krankheit*, ed. Gregor Etzelmüller and Annette Weissenrieder (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012); Shiri Versano, “Religion and Spirituality as a Coping Mechanism with Cancer,” Ph.D. Bamberg 2012; see also the contributions to *Religion in bioethischen Diskursen: interdisziplinäre, internationale und interreligiöse Perspektiven*, ed. Friedemann Voigt (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010). Cf. also the contributions to *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), especially the contribution by Matthias Vollmer, “Sünde – Krankheit – ‘väterliche Züchtigung’: Sünden als Ursache von Krankheiten vom Mittelalter bis in die Frühe Neuzeit” (261–86).

⁴⁹ Maria Tasinato, *Figurata malia: il taumaturgo e la phantasia tra paganesimo e cristianesimo*. Soggetto & la scienza, 5 (Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell’immagine, 1988); Roland Littlewood, *The Butterfly and the Serpent: Essays in Psychiatry, Race, and Religion* (London and New York: Free Association Books, 1998); see also the contributions to *Les pères de l’église face à la science médicale de leur temps: Actes du troisième colloque d’études patristiques, Paris, 9–11 septembre 2004*, ed. Véronique Boudon-Millot and Bernard Pouderon. Théologie historique, 117 (Paris: Beauchesne, 2005). For an overview of thaumaturgy, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thaumaturgy> (last accessed on April 5, 2013). See also the contribution to this volume by Liliana Leopardi.

was that the king represented God here on earth; he was the *imago Dei*, hence carried particular powers that went beyond all rational approaches to human life. Intriguingly, numerous writers throughout the centuries made considerable attempts at verifying what they had heard, and then, after close observations of the events with the king and the masses of the sick, offered detailed comments and regularly reported of actual miracles that happened in large numbers.⁵⁰

The court historiographer Charles Bernard related about the achievements of King Louis XIII that he healed 2730 sick people on New Year and Pentecost 1628. Even former Huguenots, after their conversion to Catholicism, experienced miraculous healing, at least after several attempts. Bernard clearly expressed his concern with verification and his status as an eye-witness in order to authenticate the religious phenomenon, but by all accounts some kind of actual healing must have happened by way of the king touching the sick, lame, blind, and others. The usual rhetorical phrase, or the magical formula bringing about the healing, was very similar to a priest's blessing: "Le Roy te touche et Dieu te guerit."⁵¹

Of course, that is only one side of the story. And considering that massive numbers of people believed in it, resulting in many miracle healing, some kind of psychosomatic effect must have been achieved. On the other side, the cult itself was specifically promoted by the royal house throughout the centuries and served both political and economic purposes.⁵² But we can safely assume that most miracle accounts were carefully developed and then launched by the Catholic Church, and miracle sites were regularly closely supervised by the clergy for its own purposes. All that, however, does not undermine the miraculous events as perceived and obviously also believed by the devout pilgrims and other observers. In other words, this does not mean that we have to dismiss the phenome-

50 Philipp Contamine, "Wunderheilung der Könige von Frankreich," *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 9.2 (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1998), 367.

51 Hermann Weber, "Das 'Toucher Royal' in Frankreich zur Zeit Heinrichs IV. und Ludwigs XIII.," *European Monarchy: Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. Heinz Duchhardt, Richard A. Jackson, and David Sturdy (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992), 155–70; here 163. See also David J. Sturdy, "The Royal Touch in England," *ibid.*, 171–84. The seminal study on this topic was presented by Marc Bloch, *Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E. Anderson (1961; London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1973). For a fascinating document reflecting on this phenomenon, see *The Ceremonies Us'd in the Time of King Henry VII for the Healing of Them that be Diseas'd with the Kings Evil* (London: Henry Hills ..., 1686).

52 Anja Rathmann-Lutz, "Images" *Ludwigs des Heiligen im Kontext dynastischer Konflikte des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. *Orbis Mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters*, 12 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010); see also Anne-Hélène Alliot, *Filles de roy de France. Princesses royales, mémoire de saint Louis et conscience dynastique (de 1270 à la fin du XVIe siècle)*. *Culture et société médiévales*, vol. 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

non itself as the result of propaganda and manipulation, even if that was the case indeed, artistically orchestrated behind the scene by the authorities and the Church organization.

What matters most, especially for the sick, lame, blind, or leper, or any other person suffering from a mental illness or terminal disease, or a devastating disfigurement, was not how the miracles had come about, or who might have been responsible for them, but whether the healing reflected in a surreal and apophatic manner the actual presence of God in His infinite mercy here on earth. What those desperate people have always been looking for is just a shred of hope, both in the past and in the present.⁵³ It might not be possible to verify any of those accounts, but we face, throughout the entire history since the days of Christ (and before that as well, of course), countless cases of miraculous healing, all closely predicated on the notion, developed already in the third century, of Christ as the ultimate physician (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, et al.), a concept which carried on throughout the entire Middle Ages and far into the modern time.⁵⁴

After all, human life is easily subject to horrible sicknesses and suffering, and we can never completely rely on the help of medical doctors and others. The contingency of human existence is self-evident, and throughout times people have turned to transcendental powers, deities, spirits, and the like in order to gain access to divine help. Saint Augustine admitted already that human understanding was too limited to comprehend all the workings of God (*Contra Faustum libri triginta tres*, lib. 29, cap. 2), but he also insisted that everything observable, including miracles, monsters, and the like, ultimately derives from God (*In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* CXXIV, tract. 24, cap. 1). When miracles occur, the individual is invited to perceive, for a short moment, the true extent of all existence, including the *numinosum*.⁵⁵ However, he also warned of the danger of confusing

53 See, for instance, Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Elizabeth Ficocelli, *Lourdes: Font of Faith, Hope, and Charity* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007); Robert A. Scott, *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

54 Timothy S. Miller, *Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, rev. ed. (1985; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 52–62; Michael Dornemann, *Krankheit und Heilung in der Theologie der frühen Kirchenväter*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 20 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 199–218; R. J. S. Barrett-Lennard, *Christian Healing after the New Testament: Some Approaches to Illness in the Second, Third and Fourth Centuries* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994).

55 Hermann Holzbauer, *Mittelalterliche Heiligenverehrung – Heilige Walpurga*. Eichstätter Studien, Neue Folge, 5 ([Kevelaer]: Butzon & Bercker, 1972).

God with evil spirits, or the devil (*De Trinitate libri XV*, lib. 3, cap. 7, 8, and lib. 4, cap. 11).⁵⁶

VI Miracles in the Middle Ages – With an Emphasis on Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: Healing on the Stage and Through Literary Reflections

Undoubtedly, beyond this specialized appearance of miracles, the entire history of the Christian Church, but then also of other religions, was determined by the belief in miracles, which does not need to be explained in detail here, although miracles have always played, in some areas and among some groups, supremely important roles.⁵⁷ The critical issue today, problematizing the entire complex, consists of the strong dominance of rationality and technocracy that wants to blend out the world of spirituality, hence the belief in miracles. Curiously, alternative medicine seems to return to the traditional concept of miracle healing, and we might be well advised to pay closer attention to other forces in human life since they obviously do have an effect and also affect. Otherwise, the continuous history of pilgrimage throughout the entire Middle Ages and ever since would not have made sense and would have long been exposed as simple self-deception or charlatanry. Neither Rome nor Jerusalem, or Santiago de Compostela, not to mention the hundreds of other pilgrimage sites throughout Europe, would have enjoyed such an enduring and deeply anchored attraction both for the faithful and the curious traveler.

Already in the early Middle Ages we hear of stunning examples, contained in literary texts, of how a saintly figure can offer astounding healing effects. The

⁵⁶ Maria Wittmer-Butsch and Constanze Rendtel, *Miracula: Wunderheilungen im Mittelalter. Eine historisch-psychologische Annäherung* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2003), 18–20. The foundational study on this phenomenon was published by Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1917); in English: *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry Into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey, 2nd ed. (1950; London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1970).

⁵⁷ There are several precise articles on miracles in the Middle Ages, both in the Western and the Eastern Church, in the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 9.2 (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1998), 351–62. See also the much more extensive articles on miracles in the Old Testament, in the Jewish religion, in the New Testament, in the history of the Christian Church, in Christian dogma, and in the practical theological life of the Christian Church, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller. Vol. XXXVI (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 378–415.

tenth-century Gandersheim Canoness Hrotsvita (Hrotsvit, Hrotsvitha, Roswitha, etc.) describes such a case in her hagiographical narrative of Gongolf, who was mentioned first in seventh-century Burgundian documents and might have died ca. 760. He was not a martyr in the narrow sense of the word, but impressed people through his saintly way of life as a Christian.⁵⁸ While Hrotsvit is best known today for her religious plays, her narratives about major religious figures also deserve our attention, especially in the context of mental health, spirituality, and religion. The critical aspect of the tale consists of Gongolf's most pious way of life, his extraordinary appeal that he exerts on people, his death at the hand of his wife's lover, and the miracles that then begin to happen at his grave.

Hrotsvit also included a facetious, almost shockingly crude twist at the end of the narrative, because Gongolf's wife sarcastically rejects the account about the miracles that occur at the grave site as untrustworthy, and she even dares to claim that she could do more miracles with her rear than her dead husband. God punishes her, however, and makes her fart every time she utters a word from then on, an upmost form of social embarrassment already then.⁵⁹

The central theme for us, however, consists of the direct connection between Gongolf and God, as expressed by the grace which is bestowed upon this worthy man. He creates, with God's help, a well on his estate, and everyone who comes to touch the water or to dip into it experiences a miraculous healing. Throngs of sick people soon arrive and everyone wants to profit from the divine fountain because, as they all firmly believe, God is the ultimate medical doctor and can, if they believe in the effectiveness of the water, free them from all suffering.

58 Paul von Winterfeld, *Hrotsvithae Opera* (1902; Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1978); Helena Homeyer, *Hrotsvithae Opera* (Munich: Schöningh, 1970); see now Hrotsvit, *Opera omnia*, ed. Walter Berschin. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 2000); cf. Sibylle Jefferis, "Hrotsvit and the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*," *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*, "Rara avis in Saxonia", ed. Katharina M. Wilson. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series, VII (Ann Arbor, MI: M.A.R.C., Medieval and Renaissance Collegium; produced and distributed by MARC Pub. Co., 1987), 239–52. For an excellent introduction to Hrotsvit, see now the contributions to *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960): Contextual and Interpretive Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 34 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013). For the history of the saint Gongolf, see Homeyer, *Hrotsvithae Opera*, 96–98. See also the excellent articles online: <http://www.heiligenlexikon.de/BiographienG/Gangolf.html>, and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangulphus> (both last accessed on Aug. 12, 2013).

59 Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); she is, however, not aware of this example.

Hrotsvit does not examine the specifics and only presents the account as a factual report that does not need to be questioned or criticized. Her narrative pursues only the goal of uplifting the readers, to inspire them in their faith, and to demonstrate what a pious and devout person can achieve even here in this life. Nevertheless, she deeply reflects on medieval spirituality as a springboard for physical health. True faith in the well's divinely created water in honor of the saintly man Gongolf proves to be the decisive element in the entire healing process. As soon as any sick person feels the first signs of recovery, does he turn to laudatory hymns dedicated to God, so the medical miracle is thus recognized as a spiritual one, and the throng of devout individuals reconfirms how much Christ was the fount of all health, both bodily and spiritually (303–46).⁶⁰

Hrotsvit did not, of course, develop a new idea or concept, but she certainly underscored in dramatic fashion how much faith mattered at her time with regard to healing, that is, how much medieval Christians were convinced of the supreme importance of the belief in miracle healing.⁶¹ And without going too much astray here, we can probably presume that very similar phenomena existed in other religions throughout the world, and actually can be observed until today, although it is always very difficult to differentiate between, on the one hand, the serious attempt to bring about healing or to find the miraculous cure, and, on the other, the quack medicine practiced by countless fortune seekers with no personal power or any healing capabilities.

60 Matthias Vollmer, “Sünde – Krankheit – ‘väterliche Züchtigung’: Sünde als Ursache von Krankheiten vom Mittelalter bis in die Frühe Neuzeit,” *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), 261–86. Water and baths have always played a significant role both in the physical and spiritual healing process. The number of holy wells is legion; see, for example, Arthur Gribben, *Holy Wells and Sacred Water Sources in Britain and Ireland: An Annotated Bibliography*. Garland Folklore Bibliography, 17 (New York and London: Garland, 1992); Michael P. Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells and Popular Catholic Devotion* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); see also James Rattue, *The Living Stream: Holy Wells in Historical Context* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995); *Heilige Quellen, heilende Brunnen*, ed. Wolfgang Bauer and Clemens Zerling (Saarbrücken: Neue Erde, 2009). For a very rich collection of relevant studies on this topic, see the contributions to *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. Technology and Change in History, 11 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

61 Deirdre Elizabeth Jackson, *Marvellous to Behold: Miracles in Medieval Manuscripts* (London: British Library, 2007); Robert A. Scott, *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Corinne J. Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance*. Studies in Medieval Romances, 13 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2010); William Henry York, *Health and Wellness in Antiquity Through the Middle Ages*. Health and Wellness in Daily Life (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012).

However, in our case the poet was not so naive as to simply embracing faith in this process of miraculous healing. When commenting on the miracles that happen at Gongolf's grave, she first describes the funeral, then the early flood of pilgrims, including the mighty and powerful, even the king himself. But then she refuses to go into further details because she has no appropriate words for the phenomena that take place at that saintly place. But she reports, full of devotion, that blind people regained their eye sights, deaf people could hear again, and lame people regained the power to walk once again. Not only Franks embark on pilgrimages to Gongolf's grave, as Hrotsvit emphasizes, but also people from many other countries, that is, anyone believing in the divine power of God here on earth, and hence of the saint buried there, serving as God's material representative. Still, she voices amazement and humbleness, doubting her own ability to describe in adequate fashion those miracles, and expresses delight in the fact that the location of Tul with the grave can enjoy such a direct connection with God: "Hinc se felicem iactat Tul terra per orbem, / Que molli gremio confovet ossa sacra" (525–26; happiness can Tul claim for itself, outstanding in all of the world since the saint's remains rest there).

In fact, since she refers here to the Frankish history, we can also draw from earlier sources. Bishop Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–ca. 594),⁶² for instance, apart from his extensive accounts of the many miracles brought about by St. Martin of Tours, reports in his *History of the Franks* (*Historia Francorum*, ca. 592), the following: Outside of Nice lived a healer named Hospicius who heard one day of a young man who was on his way to Rome to recover from his speech and hearing loss which he had lost as a result of a strong fever. The miracle account goes like this:

Hospicius felt miraculous powers rising in him through the Spirit of our Lord. He said to the deacon: 'Show me, please, this afflicted person who is travelling with you.' The deacon hurried off to his lodging and found the invalid, who was once more suffering from a high temperature. The man made signs that there was a tremendous ringing in his ears. The deacon seized his arm and rushed him off to the Saint. Hospicius laid his hand on the man's hair and pulled his head in through the window. He took some oil, consecrated it, held the man's tongue tight in his left hand and poured the oil down his throat and over the top of his head. 'In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ,' he said, 'may your ears be unsealed and your mouth opened by that miraculous power which once cast out the evil spirit from the man who was deaf and dumb.' As he said this, he asked the man what his name was. 'I am

62 Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); see also the contributions to *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood. *Cultures, Beliefs, and Tradition*, 8 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002).

called so-and-so,' he answered, enunciating the words clearly. When the deacon saw what had happened, he said: 'I thank you from the bottom of my heart, Jesus Christ, for having deigned to reveal such a miracle by the hand of your servant (VI.6, p. 335).⁶³

Gregory mentions several other miraculous healings and concludes with a reference to his authority for this account: "I heard all this from the mouth of the deaf and dumb man who, as I have told you, was cured by Hospicius. This man told me many other stories about the miracles performed by Hospicius" (VI.6, 337). In other contexts we hear of a variety of approaches of how to achieve healing, both by resorting to traditional medicine and operations, and by seeking out the help of a saint. The practical side of medicine is never completely ignored, but the spiritual quest always receives highest attention and respect among the Christian authors.⁶⁴ Altogether, we may conclude that the entire history of the Christian Church, but then also of other religions, is filled with accounts about miracles. In fact, religion itself could be defined as a belief in wonders, and most holy books are accounts of such miracles.⁶⁵

As Martin Ohst observes, "Wunderberichte und -erwartungen, die sich an lebende und tote Menschen wie an Gegenstände heften, lösen weit ausgreifende religiöse Massenysterien aus, die sich vielfach, kombiniert mit Ablassversprechen, zu dauerhaften Wallfahrten verstetigen. Als Reaktion hierauf ist eine deutliche Tendenz zur Historisierung, Relativierung und Spiritualisierung der Wundervorstellung zu deuten, die zugleich angesichts wuchernden Wildwuchses die kirchliche Anerkennungsbefugnis stark macht" (Accounts of miracles and expectations of miracles, which are attached to living or dead people, and so also to objects, trigger wide-spread religious mass hysteria, which, combined with the promise of indulgence, translate into constant pilgrimages. Thereupon we notice a clear tendency to historicize, relativize, and spiritualize the concept of miracles, which at the same time strengthens the authority of the Church to legitimate them, especially in light of an uncontrolled dissemination of such accounts).⁶⁶

⁶³ Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. with an intro. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974). For an online version of the *History of the Franks*, see <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/gregory-hist.asp> (last accessed on Aug. 10, 2013).

⁶⁴ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (see note 53), 71–77, et passim; cf. also Eberhard Demm, "Zur Rolle des Wunders in der Heiligenkonzeption des Mittelalters," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 57 (1975): 300–44; Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel, *Miracula* (see note 56), 18–29.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, Martin Ohst, "Wunder: Kirchengeschichtlich," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller. Vol. XXXVI (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 397–409.

⁶⁶ Ohst, "Wunder" (see note 65), 404.

VII *Legenda Aurea*

Some of the most powerful examples of divine intervention in human affairs, hence in the healing process and in the workings of the divine in human life can be found in saints' lives, most famously collected a long time after Gregory, by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Legenda aurea* from ca. 1260. The author was a Dominican and held high offices throughout his life, especially that of archbishop of Genoa since 1292, where he worked as a peacemaker and supporter of the poor. He died in 1298 and was beatified by Pope Pius VII in 1816. The Dominican Order continues to venerate him as a saint. His collection of hagiographical texts enjoyed tremendous popularity, as documented by more than 1000 manuscripts containing his works, and then by many printed versions of his texts in Latin and virtually every major European vernacular language.

The oldest English printed *Legend* was produced by William Caxton in 1483. Although this work was primarily intended for preachers, its astounding appeal throughout the ages confirms that Jacobus had really created a medieval 'bestseller,' as we would call it today.⁶⁷ Vast audiences were consequently deeply interested in these miracle narratives and firmly believed, as far as we can gather today, in their meaning, hence must have assumed as well that the messages contained in these texts applied to them as well because those saints were role models and demonstrated through their inner strength and spirituality what people could achieve in their own lives if they followed, even if only on a much subdued level, their examples. To illustrate the specific approach pursued by Jacobus and to highlight the impact which these texts might have had on the individual readers throughout the Middle Ages and well beyond, I choose the account of Saint Agatha (no. 39). As William Granger Ryan observes, "The ideal of the holy Christian life, as it emerges from the various legends, turns out to be a monastic and ascetical pattern, based on 'contempt for the things of earth' and on the practice of humility, chastity, obedience to God and the Church, and patience with the trials of this life ... in view of the hope of heaven and the gaining of merit toward that end."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan. 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). See also the solid article in *Wikipedia* at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobus_de_Voragine (last accessed on April 18, 2013).

⁶⁸ William Granger Ryan, trans., *The Golden Legend* (see note 67), xviii. See also the discussion of this important collection of hagiographical texts by Rosemarie Danziger in her contribution to this volume. For a magisterial discussion of the impact which the *Golden Legend* had on late

The basic conflict in this saint's life closely follows a very common pattern of this literary genre, presenting to us the suffering of the beautiful, noble, rich, and pious Agatha, who is persecuted by the low-born, avaricious, libidinous, and mean-spirited Consular Officer of Sicily, Quintianus. At first Agatha is handed over to a woman of ill repute (procuress) and her prostitutes, but even after thirty days they have not been successful in changing her mind and her strong faith in Christ. When brought into the Consul's presence, she resists all threats and punishments, and actually succeeds in ridiculing her oppressor through her absolute resolve never to turn her back on her own faith. The next day she continues to defy all warnings and commands to pray to the heathen gods, so Quintianus orders her to be tortured, first on the rack, but all to no avail because she receives divine help and feels no pain, as she claims. Worse even, because so degrading for her as a woman, her breasts are brutally twisted for a long time and then cut off. Agatha reprimands and shames her enemy, emphasizing that he himself had been suckled at his mother's breast, and yet he felt no compunction about ordering this torture to her body. Moreover, she emphasizes, underscoring the uselessness of all of his physical efforts to squash her religious determination: "In my soul I have breasts untouched and unharmed, with which I nourish all my senses, having consecrated them to the Lord from infancy" (I, 155).

At night, a divine figure appears offering her help, and it turns out to be Saint Peter. She rejects all medicine that he wants to provide her with, referring to her deep faith in Christ. Once she has made that statement, the appearance reveals its true nature and pronounces that she is healed because of Christ's grace. The next day Quintianus tries new tortures on her, especially after she has mocked, if not even insulted him and his false faith, but while poor Agatha is cruelly mistreated, an earthquake occurs, so people come rushing to the court and blame the Consul for this horrible catastrophe. Uncertain what to do, he sends her back to prison, where she eventually dies after having prayed to God one more time.

medieval culture, see Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and The Golden Legend*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (2011; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). The press offers the following succinct summary of the book's core content on its webpage: "*In Search of Sacred Time* explains how *The Golden Legend* – an encyclopedic work that followed the course of the liturgical calendar and recounted the life of the saint for each feast day – worked its way into the fabric of medieval life. Le Goff describes how this ambitious book was carefully crafted to give sense and shape to the Christian year, underscoring its meaning and drama through the stories of saints, miracles, and martyrdoms. Ultimately, Le Goff argues, *The Golden Legend* influenced how medieval Christians perceived the passage of time, Christianizing time itself and reconciling human and divine temporality (<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10203.html>; last accessed on March 5, 2014). See my review in *Mediaevistik* 27 (forthcoming).

Her remains are buried, and angels in disguise appear to honor her grave, which creates much amazement among the populace, and many people subsequently make pilgrimages to that site as well, including pagans and Jews (I, 156). At the same time, Quintianus, trying to steal Agatha's treasures, is killed by his horses and so disappears from the scene altogether.

The true proof of Agatha's sainthood, however, emerged a year later when a volcano nearby erupts and threatens the city, but the lava flow stops exactly at the point where people have hung up the pall that had covered Agatha's tomb. Other miracles were later reported as well, as the narrator confirms through a quote from St. Ambrose: "glorious obsequies shine about her mortal frame as the angel choir acclaims the holiness of her soul and the liberation of her native land" (I, 157). The belief in this saint and countless others has deeply determined the entire world of the Catholic Church, and miracle healings continue to be reported, as in the case of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, sainted on May 10, 2012,⁶⁹ and of Saint Damian of Molokai, Hawai'i, on October 11, 2009.⁷⁰

In the example of Saint Martin, as related in the *Legenda aurea*, we are told of miracle healing that happens even if those who do not want this are affected. The narrator reports of two men, one blind, the other a cripple, who make their money through begging. Since they know that their severe bodily handicap ensures that people feel pity for them and hence give them rich alms, they try to avoid getting in contact with the corpse of Saint Martin when it is carried around in a procession. While other people would praise God if such a miracle were to happen to them, these two men regard this divine workings as detrimental to their business and move to another house. However, as if by God's intervention, the route of the procession is suddenly changed and passes by the two men while they transfer to the new domicile. Almost against their own wish, they are experiencing a miraculous healing: "since God bestows blessings even on those who do not ask for them, the two partners found themselves completely cured against their will and were sorely aggrieved at this turn of fortune" (II, 300).

⁶⁹ <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=14269>; <http://hoyden-sandfirebrands.blogspot.com/2012/05/late-great-canonization-of-hildegard.html> (both last accessed on April 18, 2013).

⁷⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Father_Damien (last accessed on August 18, 2013).

VIII Medicine and Spirituality: Medieval and Early Modern Aspects

Both in the Middle Ages and in modern times people have looked for miracle healing and have either carried out ceremonies or have gone on pilgrimages. Countless churches and chapels have been built for that purposes, large and small, both in Europe and in the rest of the world. After all, people often suffer from terrifying and painful sickness and do not find help from the medical profession. Pain is a devastating force against which those affected try to find relief with all their power, either with ordinary medications or narcotics, and possibly through faith and spirituality. The fear of death commonly leads to the same quest for a panacea beyond commonly available drugs. The rich history of veneration of the saints throughout the entire Middle Ages and basically even until today confirms this observation, whether we think of the Christian or the Hindu context.⁷¹

Many bishop's *vitae* were predicated on miracles which those 'holy' men had achieved, and which then motivated posterity to visit the site where the respective bishop was buried, trying to replicate the miracle by means of prayer, touching of the relics, donations, or using water that emanated from wells near the holy site. Saint Heribert of Deutz near Cologne (999–1021), for instance, was reported to have involuntarily brought about the healing of the sick and blind with the water or wine with which he had washed his hands after the holy communion. Even though Heribert rejected at first the appeals to help because he did not deem himself worthy to bring about such miracles, when the other persons then secretly got hold of that water or wine, they immediately recovered and regained their health once they had poured those liquids on their bodies. In other cases the saintly bishop silently prayed to God for the sick and then witnessed the miracle himself. Heribert was, however, said to have tried hard to avoid the impression in the public that he was working explicitly on the healing, and to have kept his prayer a secret.⁷²

⁷¹ Joe Nickell, *Looking for a Miracle: Weeping Icons, Relics, Stigmata, Visions & Healing Cures* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1993); Robert A. Scott, *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010); see also the comprehensive volume on this topic, *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles*, ed. Graham H. Twelftree. Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷² Rupert von Deutz, *Vita Heriberti: Kritische Edition mit Kommentar und Untersuchungen* von Peter Dinter. Veröffentlichungen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein, insbesondere das Alte Erzbistum Köln, 13 (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1976); Catherine Mumelter, *Vita Heriberti: Rupert von Deutz – Biographie eines Erzbischofs* (Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2013), chpts. 16–23, 94–103.

Modern science seems to be the critical instrument aiming at the deconstruction of the belief in miracles, but even today there are many aspects in human life that evade rational explanations and are thus associated with miracles. Medieval theologians from Augustine to the Venerable Bede and Bernard of Clairvaux all struggled hard with the phenomenon of miracles and investigated it closely and carefully in their works, not to question the working of God, but to understand how ordinary people could or should respond to miracles and profit from them for their bodily and spiritual salvation.⁷³

Moreover, as countless theologians have argued, but which modern medicine might be able to confirm through other approaches once again, there has always been the concept of sinfulness leading to sickness, or, in modern parlance, of sickness reflecting deep-seated psychological problems, such as sins.⁷⁴ Both the visual arts and music, both literary texts and sculptures have consistently been employed throughout time to address fundamental medical issues, as countless medieval examples illustrate.⁷⁵

Intriguingly, modern integrative medicine has also successfully operated with music, for instance, to bring about healing processes of an amazing kind.⁷⁶ Miracles cannot be proven in a scientific or historical sense, but individuals throughout times have always accepted miraculous phenomena, since they experienced

73 Benedicta Ward, "Miracles in the Middle Ages," *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (see note 71), 149–64. She concludes: "Medieval miracles had the same message as those in the gospels: God is among us, God is for us and God is in us. There was also, then, as always, the same human need for cures of the same types of sickness, a kind of *koinonia* of suffering, which reached out to God-in-Christ for not only salvation but earthly help in ultimate and personal need" (162).

74 Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

75 Oskar Rosenthal, *Wunderheilungen und ärztliche Schutzpatrone in der bildenden Kunst* (Leipzig, Vogel, 1925); Jack Grazier, *The Power Beyond: In Search of Miraculous Healing* (New York: Macmillan, 1989); Ronald Kydd, *Healing Through the Centuries: Models for Understanding* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998); Marcia A Kupfer, *The Art of Healing: Painting for the Sick and the Sinner in a Medieval Town* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Maria Elisabeth Wittmer-Butsch and Constanze Rendtel, *Miracula: Wunderheilungen im Mittelalter: eine historisch-psychologische Annäherung* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003); see also the contributions to *Heilungen und Wunder: theologische, historische und medizinische Zugänge*, ed. Josef Pichler and Christoph Heil, together with Thomas Klampfl (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007).

76 Margaret Heal and Tony Wigram, *Music Therapy in Health and Education*, ed. Margaret Heal and Tony Wigram (London and Philadelphia, PA: J. Kingsley, 1993); Lisa Wong and Robert Viagas, *Scales to Scalpels: Doctors Who Practice the Healing Arts of Music and Medicine* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2012).

them at least through their own lenses, whether true or not. Since people have expressed firm belief in miracles, and since many concrete events have occurred as a result of this belief – pilgrimage, building of churches, concrete and specific healing, wish fulfillment, etc. – the issue is not how to confirm and verify miracles, but how to analyze that belief and to comprehend how it actually worked, as far as we can say today, in mental, philosophical, and spiritual terms. Curiously, faith in the Christian religion automatically implies a certain acceptance of miracles as reported about in the Old and New Testament, and this undoubtedly can also be claimed for other religions. Those miracles, however, only happened after the suffering person had confessed his/her sins, had accepted the own responsibility, and had entrusted him/herself under the guidance of a saint or a God's direct power, working at a pilgrimage site. Modern medicine would refer in such cases to the impact of the immune system, hence to physiological-somatic conditions which a pilgrimage with its strong psychological results might have triggered.⁷⁷ Although details really escape us here, since neither the miracle accounts nor the specific reports about the healing processes to investigative commissions working toward the sanctification of an individual such as St. Elisabeth of Thuringia were scientific enough, we still can trust that some kind of miraculous healing took place.

Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel speak in this context of an “Umstimmung des Immunsystems (reorientation of the immune system), meaning that there must be healing factors in the body that are influenced by emotions, hence spirituality.⁷⁸ We might also explain some of these phenomena as “akausale[] Synchronizität” (acausal synchronicity),⁷⁹ but it remains inexplicable in a scientific framework how those miracles really worked, or how prayer and donations to a pilgrimage site, for instance, actually achieved the desired goal. Since we in the Western World no longer live in a society determined by a holistic, communal faith system, individual forms of meditation or prayer might have some effect for the desperate person seeking help, but without the religious “Grundüberzeugung” (fundamen-

⁷⁷ Bill D. Moyers. Betty S. Flowers, and David Grubin, *Healing and the Mind* (New York : Doubleday, 1993); Marilyn Schlitz, Tina Amorok, and Marc S. Micozzi, *Consciousness & Healing: Integral Approaches to Mind-Body Medicine* (Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, 2005); Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* (New York: Hyperion, 2005); Shauna L Shapiro, Linda E Carlson, and Jon Kabat-Zinn, *The Art and Science of Mindfulness: Integrating Mindfulness into Psychology and the Helping Professions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009).

⁷⁸ Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel, *Miracula* (see note 55), 263.

⁷⁹ Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel, *Miracula* (see note 55), 289.

tal conviction) of the larger community the necessary “Verstärkungseffekt” (reinforcement effect) does no longer come to its full fruition.⁸⁰

After all, miracles are not vehicles for the understanding of this world; instead, if they occur, they prove to be windows into a metaphysical dimension that, for whatever reason, has intervened in ordinary life and to manifest itself through a miraculous impact (healing, influence, action, etc.). We might even go so far as to identify religion as a belief in miracles.⁸¹ Both with respect to miracles and to the larger issues addressed in this book, the central concern does not rest in how the medical sciences would come to terms with the metaphysical dimension, but how non-scientific medical approaches to this world with all its problems might prove to be alternative, complementary methods of significance.⁸²

IX Human Suffering from a Spiritual Perspective

Before I turn to my two specific cases with which I intend to illustrate the broader theoretical framework that informs this volume, I want to explore the meaning of the entire complex of mental health, spirituality, and religion as a foundation for the subsequent collection of articles. These all address the various issues from ever changing perspectives and yet have formed a harmonious collective in the hope of bringing to light, from a literary-historical and medical-psychological, but also from a religious-historical perspective, concepts about the intricate, perhaps never fully fathomable interconnectedness of body and mind, the very phenomenon that makes us all to human beings.

When we consider how people handle extreme situations, we discover a surprisingly uniform, transcultural, and trans-historical perspectives. Human suffering can be mollified and even overcome by different religions, different

80 Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel, *Miracula* (see note 55), 327.

81 For reflections on miracles from a philosophical perspective, see Michael P. Levine, “Philosophers on Miracles,” *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (see note 71), 291–308. See also Robert J. Fogelin, *A Defense of Hume on Miracles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Raymond Martin, “Historians on Miracles,” *God Matters: Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. id. (New York: Longman, 2003), 412–27; Alvin Plantinga, “Divine Action in the World (Synopsis),” *Ratio*, new series, 19 (2006): 495–504.

82 Nicholas Saunders, *Divine Action and Modern Science* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Christopher C Knight, *The God of Nature: Incarnation and Contemporary Science* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007); see now also the contributions to *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society*, ed. Philip S. Gorski ([Brooklyn, NY]: Social Science Research Council; New York: New York University Press, 2012).

value systems, by different coping mechanisms, even by cultural training, but in essence death, above all, has always constituted one of the most difficult challenges in human life. People throughout time have always depended on specific mechanisms to cope with grief.⁸³ We know this from countless reports, narratives, images, musical compositions, architectural designs, funeral rituals and ceremonies, and other manifestations of human efforts to cope with death. Grief and mourning are the natural result from suffering; the loss of a loved one has never been taken lightly, since there is so much pain involved. How we approach pain and suffering determines much about ourselves as individuals and sheds important light on us as a society and culture.⁸⁴

This is not to say that cultural differences would not matter in face of death. In fact, each society can be well characterized through a close study of its handling of death, funeral rites, death culture at large, and attitudes toward death. Undoubtedly, medieval approaches to death were very different from those that we pursue today; nevertheless the human creature in us has always regarded death

83 Paul C. Rosenblatt, R. Patricia Walsh, Douglas A. Jackson, *Grief and Mourning in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New Haven, CT: HRAF Press, 1976); Paul C. Rosenblatt, "Grief in Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives," *Death and Dying: A Quality of Life*, ed. Patricia Pegg and Enroe Metze (London: Pitman Books, 1981), 11–18. See the contributions to *Grief in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Casebook*, ed. Larry A. Platt and V. Richard Persico, Jr. (New York and London: Garland, 1992). The modern world has never eliminated grief, and our personal and scholarly efforts to come to terms with it continue; see, for instance, *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Post-Traumatic Stress Disease constitutes a continuous problem especially in the North American society; see Wilbur J. Scott, *Vietnam Veterans Since the War: The Politics of PTSD, Agent Orange, and the National Memorial* (1993; Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); Patrick Hayes and Jim Campbell, *Bloody Sunday: Trauma, Pain and Politics* (London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005); Melissa M. Kelley, *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010); *Living with Grief: Spirituality and End-Of-Life Care*, ed. Kenneth J. Doka, Amy S. Tucci, and Keith G. Meador (Washington, DC: Hospice Foundation of America, 2011).

84 The literature on this topic is legion; see, for instance, *Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual*, ed. Jenny Hockey, Jeanne Katz, and Neil Small. Facing Death (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001); *The Study of Dying: From Autonomy to Transformation*, ed. Allan Kellehear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Melissa M. Kelley, *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010); Arnold Krupat, *That the People Might Live: Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). In fact, virtually every culture and literature is deeply aware about the huge role which literature can and must play in handling grief, mourning, and suffering.

as highly painful, especially for the survivors.⁸⁵ Grief and mourning are universal experiences, even if the material manifestations often prove to be highly unique in each cultural period. Muslims mourn differently than Hindus, and Christians interpret death quite in their own way, in contrast to Jews or Animists. Yet, at the end, all human beings experience death as tragic, profoundly sad, and bitter. Death is a deep loss and represents an existential challenge for all people in all cultures. Not surprisingly, death has been a central topic particularly in research focused on the late Middle Ages, but its experience is simply timeless.⁸⁶

Throughout times religion and spirituality have served well as critical springboards for the process of mourning, and we would be rather miserable creatures if we did not know how to work actively on our mental health, especially in face of death. Without accepting grief and pain as fundamental aspects of all existence, we would be in the grave danger of losing our mental health, assuming that we really know what we mean by that term. Is madness, for instance, a clear-cut matter? Are sanity, rationality, and logic the only reliable benchmarks for the critical assessment of the human condition in past and present? If that were the case,

85 For a broad cultural-historical overview, see Alois M. Haas, *Todesbilder im Mittelalter: Fakten und Hinweise in der deutschen Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989); for economic-historical perspectives regarding death in medieval cities, see *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600*, ed. Steven Bassett (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1992); for a variety of approaches to death in the Middle Ages, see *Tod im Mittelalter*, ed. Arno Borst, Gerhart von Graevenitz, Alexander Patschovsky, and Karlheinz Stierle. Konstanzer Bibliothek, 20 (Constance: UVK – Universitätsverlag, 1993); for the impact of the Black Death on late medieval death culture, see Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996); for studies on the death of the mighty ones in the Middle Ages, see D. L. D'Avray, *Death and the Prince: Memorial Preaching Before 1350* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and *Der Tod des Mächtigen: Kult und Kultur des Todes spätmittelalterlicher Herrscher*, ed. Lothar Kolmer (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997); *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Charlotte A. Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead in Late Medieval Strasbourg: The Cathedral's Book of Donors and Its Use (1320–1521). Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West* (Farnham, Surrey, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011). See now the intriguing article on how various kinds of people were treated after their death according to their status in life in light of dogmatic issues by Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “‘Or le Bagna la pioggia e move il vento’: Vom Ausschluss der Toten aus der Ecclesia des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Ecclesia als Kommunikationsraum in Mitteleuropa (13.–16. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Eva Doležalová and Robert Šimnek. Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, 122 (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), 193–210.

86 Hiram Kümper, “Death,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

we would have to dismiss phenomena such as mysticism, idealism, euphoria, epiphany, or the belief in miracles as mere illusion or even delusion, or worse, as mental disability, insanity, perhaps madness. Love can certainly be identified as one of the strongest forces in life, right next to hatred, but while the first constructs, the other deconstructs.

At any rate, both features confirm that we as individuals are deeply determined by esoteric, immaterial forces that require from us a constant interaction with them; otherwise we tend to fall sick or to lose our mind because of our extreme reliance on the material existence. Worse even, ignoring or rejecting those emotions opens the floodgate for uncontrollable violence, often directed against oneself or one's own family. Of course, by the same token, poetry, for instance, is not a simple solution, if any at all; it is not the overarching pacifier, and it would be a self-deception to believe that literary authors have ever defended human rights effectively in practical terms or defeated an individual in his/her attempt to assume dictatorial powers. Likewise, it seems highly doubtful whether a work of fiction might have ever prevented a murder to happen, or made it happen that violence was avoided.

X Literature and Physical Well-Being

Significantly, however, philosophers and religious thinkers throughout time have not simply accepted this mundane binary opposition and have instead recognized the wide range of options available in our humanistic enterprise.⁸⁷ As difficult as it might be to grasp spirituality in intellectual terms, and as elusive as it appears in a material context, virtually all cultures throughout times have acknowledged the dual nature of our existence, consisting of the material and the spiritual. We can and must resort to the hard sciences in order to understand the workings of our physical environment, and we can rely on mathematics and astronomy, for instance, to measure our world and outer space. But we cannot be satisfied with

⁸⁷ Andreas Brenner, "Mystiker und Wahnsinnige, eine Beängstigung der Philosophie. Die Ausgrenzung a-rationaler erkenntnisformen als Methode," *Religion und Gesundheit*: (see note 40), 381–96; here 383, observes, for instance, "Göttlicher Wahnsinn ist also dem gesunden Verstand allemal vorzuziehen. Das Problem am Wahnsinn ist aber, das (sic) man nicht immer weiß, ob er göttlich oder ganz einfach menschlich ist Auch Menschen sind zur Wahnsagekunst in der Lage, gleichwohl natürlich nur durch die Hilfe der Götter" (Divine madness is hence always to be preferred over healthy reason. The problem with madness, however, is that one never quite knows whether it is divine or simply human Even people are capable of mad prophecy, but of course only with the help of the gods).

their output, and instead constantly need to search more deeply, in a spiritual manner, for the quintessence of our lives as human beings.⁸⁸ In fact, to provide an example, most political revolutions have been brought about by the power of the word, by poetry, speeches, sermons, plays, novels, newspaper articles, pamphlets, manifestoes, etc. Hence it would be incorrect to relegate literature at large to the simple category of entertainment and perhaps also instruction, claiming, by the same token, that only scientific, religious, legal, or pragmatic documents have mattered and brought about major changes, or paradigm shifts.⁸⁹

The power of the word, an emanation of spirituality and a tool for all religions, cannot be underestimated.⁹⁰ Dictatorships have never lasted for ever, and violence has never raged indefinitely. Humans cannot survive without some form of peace, love, and of happiness free of violence. Tyrants have been able to wreak havoc many times in the past and in the present, and they have incarcerated poets and writers, above all, because they deeply sense the danger of the written word targeting their wrongdoing. Ultimately, the literary works have survived, long after their creators' death, and the triumph of the human spirit has been guaranteed always because of the incredible endurance of the poetic word.

Religion, spirituality, and mental health are intimately interlocking entities, if properly understood, and they find some of their most powerful expressions in the arts, in literature, in music, in architecture, and other aesthetically deter-

88 Albrecht Classen, "Humanities – To Be Or Not To Be, That Is The Question," Editorial for the journal *Humanities – Open Access Journal* (<http://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities>) <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/1/1/54/> (Sept. 16, 2011); id., "The Role of the Humanities Past and Present: Future Perspectives Based on Ancient Ideas: Reflections by a Medievalist," *Alfinge: Revista de Filología* 24 (2012): 9–30. "The Challenges of the Humanities, Past, Present, and Future: Why the Middle Ages Mean So Much For Us Today and Tomorrow," *Humanities Open Access* 3.1 (2014) (<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/3/1/1>)

89 See the contributions to *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 347 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008).

90 Concerning the power of the biblical text, for instance, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). The same could be applied to the power of the Qu'ran or the Torah. We have known already for a long time of the power and effectiveness of charms, magic, prayers, and blessings. See Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen* (see note 11). From a political perspective, see Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Every Book Its Reader: The Power of the Printed Word to Stir the World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005). Regarding the relevance of literacy in the development of culture, see Alfred Burns, *The Power of the Written Word: The Role of Literacy in the History of Western Civilization*. *Studia classica*, 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

mined manifestations, especially in the Middle Ages.⁹¹ If we ever needed a justification for paying so much attention to those fields both within and outside of the academy, here we come across the true and ultimate answer, an answer which might sound very muted or even repressed at first, especially in the case of poetry, but which certainly promises to develop alternative ideas and concepts, and to provide us with a discourse through which human suffering and sorrow, for instance, can be processed and sublimated effectively.⁹² As Lactantius (ca. 240–ca. 320) had already affirmed, ‘the task of the poet consists of transferring into another phenomenon that what has really happened, by means of a masking transformation, in an aesthetically pleasing manner.’⁹³ Poetry, hence, represents a medium for truth finding, and it could be identified as the catalyst for ethical, moral, religious, and hence also spiritual investigations.

Political or religious texts can, produced at the right time and dispersed among the right people, provoke a revolution, such as Martin Luther’s ninety-five theses in 1517 or Karl Marx’s and Friedrich Engels’s *Communist Manifesto* from 1848. The large corpus of mystical texts from the Middle Ages quickly confirms how much the Church had to struggle in coping with those new spiritual movements that pushed all Catholics strongly into new directions of belief, thinking, and world-views. Some mystics quickly gained the reputation of being new prophets and were then even sainted (Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Siena), others were apprehended and burned at the stake (Marguerite Porete, Joan of Arc). By the fifteenth century the Church authorities even went so far as to plug the flood of mysticism altogether with radical efforts, banning all attempts to formulate mystical thoughts, especially by women. For the Church, mysticism had become a source of grave danger undermining the stability of its own authority because those mystical individuals opened the floodgates toward new, uncharted terri-

91 Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, “*Pulchrum et verum convertuntur*: Zur Wahrheit des Ästhetischen in der Poetik des Mittelalters,” *Mittelalterliche Poetik in Theorie und Praxis: Festschrift für Fritz Peter Knapp zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Thordis Hennings, Manuela Niesner, Christoph Roth, and Christian Schneider (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 169–78; he draws his text examples from Rosario Assunto, *Die Theorie des Schönen im Mittelalter*. DuMont Dokumente Reihe I: Kunstgeschichte Deutung Dokumente, 1 (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1963). This was reprinted in 1982, 1987, and 1996.

92 *Martyrdom in Literature: Visions of Death and Meaningful Suffering in Europe and the Middle East from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Friederike Pannewick. *Literaturen im Kontext*, 17 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004); *Through a Glass Darkly: Suffering, the Sacred, and the Sublime in Literature and Theory*, ed. Holly Faith Nelson, Lynn R. Szabo, and Jens Zimmermann ([Waterloo, Ont.]: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010); Michael Mack, *How Literature Changes the Way We Think* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012). Again, the literature on this topic is legion.

93 Vollmann, “*Pulchrum et verum convertuntur*” (see note 91), 172.

tories of spirituality which threatened the traditional clerical authorities.⁹⁴ The suppressive system of the SED in East Germany did not come down because of some poets or authors, but those who opposed the system through their (literary) words upheld the spirit of freedom and thus contributed in a critical fashion to monumental events of the peaceful revolution in 1989.⁹⁵

Literature, for instance, is not only entertaining, and it does not simply develop alternative worlds (fairy tales, romances, utopias, sci-fi), it also offers profound images of and for the human soul, projecting our suffering or dreams onto fictional characters, exploring strategies for us to improve our lives, and thus can establish a platform for the entire world of emotions – and this already in the Middle Ages, if not even more so then in comparison with modern society.⁹⁶ From this perspective, both the Bible and the Qu’ran also fall into the category of literature, since they examine and determine the framework of ethics, morality, and, ultimately spirituality, not to mention that they also provide legal guidelines in a religious context, and ultimately, of course, offer a divine message.

In the Middle Ages and the early modern age the Christian Church offered a very constructive mental framework for people to handle suffering and grief at large. The same can be claimed for the other monotheistic religions and their societies. Since the Enlightenment, however, and with the rise of modern rationality, the situation for people to cope in tragic situations has become much more problematic and difficult because of a growing distance people’s ordinary lives and the world of spirituality, unless the individual continues to be supported by a strong faith.

XI Lamentation, Consolation, and *Trauerarbeit*

Throughout the Middle Ages we encounter the specific narrative genre of *consolatio* literature, beginning with Boëthius’s famous *De consolacione philoso-*

⁹⁴ Werner Williams-Krapp, “Mystikdiskurs und mystische Literatur im 15. Jahrhundert,” *Neuere Aspekte germanistischer Spätmittelalterforschung*, ed. Freimut Löser, Robert Steinke, Klaus Vogelsgang, and Klaus Wolf. *Imagines Medii Aevi*, 29 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2012), 261–85.

⁹⁵ David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); see also the contributions to *Literary Intellectuals and the Dissolution of the State: Professionalism and Conformity in the GDR*, ed. Robert von Hallberg and Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁹⁶ Heiko Hartmann, “Utopias/Utopian Thought,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1400–08. From a mostly modern perspective, see Peter-André Alt, *Der Schlaf der Vernunft: Literatur und Traum in der Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002).

phiae, which found countless imitators and translators throughout the following centuries. In the Anglo-Saxon world, we observe a strong emphasis on grief as expressed by women, such as in *Guthlac B*, *Judith*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, and *The Wife's Lament*.⁹⁷ The heroic epic *Beowulf* does not simply conclude with the realization that their leader has died and that hence doom awaits his people. There is a major funeral, and the survivors mourn the death of their king, which in itself, from a literary point of view, constitutes a new beginning, the rise of the phoenix out of the proverbial ashes because poetry substitutes effectively for the actual loss of a person. Other major poems dealing with mourning are La₃amon's *Brut*, the anonymous *Amis and Amiloun*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, *The Seege of Troye*, *Otuel and Roland*, the *Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Truy*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and his *Legend of Thisbe*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the *Siege of Jerusalem*, John Lydgate's *Troy Book*, and others.⁹⁸

The anonymous Middle High German epic poem *The Lament (Diu Klage)* hypertrophies the treatment of grief in an extreme fashion, but this was easily matched by countless Latin sermons from the high and late Middle Ages, especially by the famous Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux.⁹⁹ While traditional scholarship has tended to belittle *Diu Klage* particularly because of the endless laments in face of the catastrophic results from the battle between the Nibelungs and the Huns, with virtually no survivors except for the Hunnish King Attila and his two vassals, Dietrich and Hildebrand, in reality we can now recognize here a remarkable literary attempt to come to terms with grief and to illustrate the central function of narratives to provide a catalyst to cope effectively with such profound pain.¹⁰⁰ While in the *Nibelungenlied* the central topic had focused on

97 Renate Haas, *Die mittellenglische Todesklage: Realitätsbezug, abendländische Tradition und individuelle Gestaltung*. Sprache und Literatur. Regensburger Arbeiten zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 16 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, and Cirencester, UK: Peter D. Lang, 1990). She emphasizes, above all, the deep influence of Latin models, such as by Geoffrey of Vintsauf, on Middle English poems.

98 Haas, *Die mittellenglische Totenklage* (see note 97), 138–39.

99 Urban Küsters, "Klagefiguren: Vom höfischen Umgang mit der Trauer," *An den Grenzen höfischer Kultur: Anfechtungen der Lebensordnung in der deutschen Erzähldichtung des hohen Mittelalters*, ed. Gert Kaiser. Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, 12 (Munich: Fink, 1991), 9–75; Peter von Moos, *Consolatio: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Trostliteratur und zum Problem der christlichen Trauer*. Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 3. 1–4 (Munich: Fink, 1971–1972).

100 Albrecht Classen, "Diu Klage – A Modern Text from the Middle Ages?," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* XCVI, 3 (1995): 315–29; id., "Medieval Manuscript Evidence Versus Modern (Mis) Interpretation: The Klage," *International Fiction Review* 24.1 & 2 (1997): 1–11; id., "Trauer müssen sie tragen: Postklassische Ästhetik des 13. Jahrhunderts in der Klage," *Ostbairische Grenzmarken. Passauer Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* XLI (1999): 51–68; id., "Rituale des Trauerns als Sinnstiftung und ethische Transformation des eigenen Daseins im agonalen Raum

heroic deeds, with Siegfried at first appearing as the outstanding, charismatic, almost mythical protagonist who is almost invincible, then being murdered by Hagen, and then on the catastrophic battle between the Huns and the Nibelungs upon the order of Kriemhilt, Siegfried's widow who lives only to achieve her revenge of the murder, *Diu Klage* reflects only on the horrible outcome and works through the havoc wreaked by uncontrolled and ultimately perverted heroism. The entire epic poem, if we can call it that, describes the enormous pain and mourning of the survivors and the results of the terrible news that then reach the Western kingdoms, where ever new waves of grief erupt. But there seems to be some hope at the end, since King Gunther's young son is crowned as the new king, and the future seems to be guaranteed after all. Emotional pain is overcome through the extreme form of mourning, and healing appears to set in thereafter.

In fact, much of medieval literature can be read in light of the fundamental question how to come to terms with grief and to deal with suffering in a constructive manner, if we think of the Old French *Chanson de Roland* or Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" in his *Canterbury Tales*,¹⁰¹ not to mention Malory's famous *Le Morte Darthur* or the many versions of the *Tristan* legend.¹⁰² As Elina Gertsman notes, "This gift of tears was precious: weeping, in certain contexts, was seen to stamp a mark of

der höfischen Welt. Zwei Fallstudien: *Diu Klage* und *Mai und Beafloer*," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 36 (2006): 30–54; Elisabeth Lienert, "Der Körper des Kriegers: Erzählen von Helden in der 'Nibelungenklage'," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 130.2 (2001): 127–42; Siegrid Schmidt, "... so sere klagete diu künigin": Brunhild vom 'Nibelungenlied' zur 'Klage'," *The Nibelungenlied: Genesis, Interpretation, Reception (Kalamazoo Papers 1997–2005)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 735 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2006), 61–76. The text itself has been edited and translated numerous times, which also reflects the considerable interest which the treatment of mourning has triggered. Joachim Bumke, *Die vier Fassungen der 'Nibelungenklage': Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte, 8.24 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); *Diu Klage, mittelhochdeutsch – neuhochdeutsch. Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar und Anmerkungen* by Albrecht Classen. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 647 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1997); *Die Nibelungenklage: Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der Ausgabe von Karl Bartsch. Einführung, neuhochdeutsche Übersetzung und Kommentar* by Elisabeth Lienert. Schöninghs mediävistische Editionen, 5 (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000).

101 Albrecht Classen, "Death Rituals and Manhood in the Middle High German Poems *The Lament*, Johannes von Tepl's *The Plowman*, and Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring*," *Grief and Gender: 700–1700*. Ed. by Jennifer C. Vaught (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 33–47.

102 Bonnie Wheeler, "Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes' Psychic Pain," *Grief and Gender* (see note 101), 65–77. See also the contributions to *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2012).

merit and distinction upon the one who was crying. Sacred and profane, public and private, emotive and ritualistic, internal and embodied, medieval weeping served as a culturally charged prism for a host of social, visual, cognitive, and linguistic performances.”¹⁰³ Crying happened, in historical times, before the cross, later in Christian processions in imitation of the biblical events, at funerals, but most often we hear about it in literary texts in all kinds of circumstances and conditions. And that is one of the fundamental functions of fictionality as well, to allow tears to well up and confront the viewer, presenting all kinds of situations of grief and mourning, showing circumstances of pain and sorrow, and then ways how to achieve healing. Although ‘only’ fictional, the poetic text, especially from the pre-modern world, allows unique insights into the true nature of our existence.¹⁰⁴

While St. Augustine, in his *Confessiones* (397–398) at first rejected crying as an expression of childishness and lack of intellectual and spiritual growth, inappropriate for a mature Christian,¹⁰⁵ in the course of his discourse he realized how much emotions were, after all, essentially important to overcome the aloofness of the philosophical mind, as advocated by Plato. For him, at the end, the “lacrimas confessionis” (7, XXI, 27, p. 350) proved to him to be fundamental in gaining the soul’s salvation. By contrast, the pages written by the ancient philosophers “do not have this face of piety, the tears of confession, your sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a contrite and a humbled heart, the salvation of your people, the city that is like a bride, the pledge of the spirit, the cup of our redemption.”¹⁰⁶ It seems that his teachings experienced, at least indirectly, some of their greatest reception in the late Middle Ages when a growing number of individuals embarked on their private quest for their spiritual salvation, if we think, for instance, of late medieval mysticism, the popularity of the *Book of Hours*, or the *Devotio Moderna*. All these representatives of spirituality basically embraced a concept of two bodies,

103 Elina Gertsman, “Introduction,” *Crying in the Middle Ages* (see note 102), xi–xx; here xi–xii.

104 For a discussion of fictionality versus history, see the contributions to *Medieval Narratives Between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, c. 1100–1400*, ed. Panagiotis A. Agapitos and Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012).

105 Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones / Bekenntnisse. Lateinisch / Deutsch*, trans., ed., and commentary by Kurt Flasch and Burkhard Mojsisch (2009; Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2012), I, 6, 7, p. 41–43; see especially Flasch’s comments in his introduction, 23–24. Nevertheless, Augustine constantly struggled against the welling-up of his tears, hence against his emotions, and used his autobiographical reflections as a springboard to repress those emotions and to gain a more rational, theologically well-founded viewpoint; see now Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, *Les Larmes d’Augustine*. Collection “Épiphanie”, 2 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2011).

106 Quoted from *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans., with an intro. and notes by John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 180.

the outer and the inner. The outer consisted of the material body, while the inner was made up of the soul, as Patricia Daily has recently observed in her study on the Flemish mystic Hadewijch.¹⁰⁷

The pain of and in human life remains hidden behind masks and closed doors just too often, both in the past and in the present, but the literary discourse eventually brings it to the surface and allows the audience/readers to come to terms with what truly makes us human, that is, to face our fallibility, weakness, failings, shortcomings, mistakes, errors, misunderstandings, and lack of communication. We would have to add the dimension of love to this discussion because here we encounter, in most concentrated form, spirituality intertwined with religious and physical elements, directed at creating a new unit of two people, bonded in love.

Perhaps the best manifestation of all three aspects can be found in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210) and in Dante's *Vita Nuova* (ca. 1280–ca. 1300), but medieval literature offers many other examples of the intricate conjuncture of the erotic with the religious, demonstrating so powerfully and meaningfully even for us today how much the poetic word serves to manifest the transcendence of the human spirit that survives often not because but despite all oppositional forces.¹⁰⁸

107 Patricia Daily, *Promised Bodies: Time, Language, and Corporeality in Medieval Women's Mystical Texts*. Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). Claire Taylor Jones, in her review of Daily's monograph, in *The Medieval Review* 14.03.18 (online), summarizes Daily's central position as follows: "Dailey emphasizes the driving role of love in patterning the outer body according to the inner through interpretation of scripture and of mystical experience. She argues that the goal of virtuous living was to transform one's material existence into a glorified and perfect body by bringing it into harmony with an inner form that was consonant with Christ. This inner body hosts the promise of unity (both with material and with God), while the outer body is a medium to be loved, read, and scripted into a future perfection in which this promise will 'become legible and enacted in life' (51)." Pain which the outer body experienced was nothing but a signal that the true goal of creating a harmonious union of outer with inner (soul) was not yet achieved, and hence also not the union with the Godhead. See also the contribution to this volume by Jean E. Jost. The literature on this topic is huge; see, for instance, the contributions to *Geistliche Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit: Festgabe für Rudolf Suntrup*, ed. Volker Honemann and Nine Miedema. Medieval to Early Modern Culture, 14 (Frankfurt a. M. et al.: Peter Lang, 2013); *Die Devotio Moderna: sozialer und kultureller Transfer (1350–1580): Frömmigkeit, Unterricht und Moral: Einheit und Vielfalt der Devotio Moderna an den Schnittstellen von Kirche und Gesellschaft, vor allem in der deutsch-niederländischen Grenzregion*, ed. Dick Boer and Iris Kwiatkowski, vol. 1 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013); Maximilian von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425–1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller*. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

108 See the contributions to *Geistliches in weltlicher und Weltliches in geistlicher Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Christoph Huber, Burghart Wachinger, and Hans-Joachim Ziegeler (see note 20);

But we do not have to despair, as both life and the poetic text inform us, since the great human potential consists of the enormous degree of growth, learning, correcting, modification, improvement, and change, after all. Literature from the pre-modern age does not necessarily constitute an ideal that we moderns only would have to copy or to follow in order to achieve our own goals today, the establishment of a happy life.

Each generation faces its own challenges, yet we need to go through constant schooling and retraining, which the literary discourse facilitates in a most intriguing fashion because it serves as a kind of mirror, often rather opaque, and the older that mirror is, the more we recognize ourselves only in a refracted fashion. Modern mirrors, however, highly polished, do nothing but to throw the image of ourselves back at us without any changes or challenges. The more we have to struggle to grasp the meaning of the secret codes contained, for instance, in a literary text, the more we also gain the opportunity to question ourselves and to perceive life through different glasses, which truly facilitates the epistemological process.

However, spirituality is not a logical function of the human brain; hence we need to probe its nature and essence through different methods that are not as clear and straightforward as we commonly would like them to be. In this regard, medieval literature, for instance, a confusing, fuzzy, opaque mirror especially for us today, provides a crucial, though not comprehensive, textual medium to rediscover the human soul, spirituality, and thus to establish mental health.¹⁰⁹

By the same token, we could also take into consideration the vast corpus of sermon literature published since the late Middle Ages and especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, without experiencing a noticeable decline since then. Then we would have to consider the large number of funeral sermons (*Leichenpredigten*), to comprehend the huge significance of the written word serving as a critical catalyst to allow the listener/reader to grasp what really constitutes the human condition.¹¹⁰ Literary texts often offer an easier way into the

Albrecht Classen, "Worldly Love – Spiritual Love. The Dialectics of Courtly Love in the Middle Ages," *Studies in Spirituality* 11 (2001): 166–86; id., "Die flämische Mystikerin Hadewijch als erotische Liebesdichterin," *Studies in Spirituality* 12 (2002): 23–42. See also the contributions to *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 347 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008).

109 Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

110 Rudolf Lenz, *De mortuis nil nisi bene?: Leichenpredigten als multidisziplinäre Quelle unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der historischen Familienforschung, der Bildungsgeschichte und der*

world of pain and sorrow by projecting a situation on a fictional stage, but the discourse itself then makes available a substitute experience, serving like a mirror of human spirituality, religion, and mental health.¹¹¹

XII Caesarius of Heisterbach: Medieval Bestseller, Psychologist, and Theologian

One of the most impressive and popular examples from the high Middle Ages proves to be the *Dialogus miraculorum* by the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach. He was born around 1180, perhaps in Cologne, and died after 1240. In 1198, after having completed a pilgrimage to St. Mary of Rocamadour in France, Caesarius joined the Cistercian monastery of Heisterbach near Bonn. He soon gained the rank as “magister novitiorum,” and in ca. 1227 prior of the same monastery. In that role he often traveled with his abbot through the Moselle valley and neighboring areas, visiting a variety of sister monasteries. He seems to have visited the famous priest Conrad of Marburg, confessor of the Saint Elizabeth of Thuringia, in ca. 1235, perhaps in order to record the account of her saintliness. Caesarius composed numerous sermons, exempla, and other clerical texts, but he is best known for his collection of miracle accounts, the *Dialogus miraculorum* from ca. 1188–1198.¹¹²

Literaturgeschichte. Marburger Personalschriften-Forschungen, 10 (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1990); Johann Anselm Steiger, *Medizinische Theologie: Christus medicus und theologia medicinalis bei Martin Luther und im Luthertum der Barockzeit, mit Edition dreier Quellentexte*. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 121 (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2005). The number of these funeral sermons goes into the hundreds of thousands from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

111 Albrecht Classen, “The Power of Sermons in War and Peace: The Example of Berthold of Regensburg,” *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature, 800–1800*, ed. A. Classen and Nadia Margolis. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 8 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 313–32.

112 Fritz Wagner, “Caesarius von Heisterbach,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Vol. 2.7 (Munich and Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1983), 1363–65; id., “Caesarius von Heisterbach: mittelalterliches Leben im Rheinland,” *Cistercienserchronik: Forum für Geschichte, Kunst, Literatur und Spiritualität des Mönchtums*, 103 (Bregenz: Verlag der Abtei Mehrerau, 1996): 55–63; Ludger Tewes, “Der Dialogus Miraculorum des Caesarius von Heisterbach: Beobachtungen zum Gliederungs- und Werkcharakter,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 79.1 (1997): 13–30; more broadly conceived, Fritz Wagner, *Essays zur zisterziensischen Literatur*. Mariawalder Mittelalter-Studien, 3 (Heimbach/Eifel, and Aachen: Bernardus-Verlag, 2009). See now also the article in *Wikipedia* with good bibliographical references: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarius_von_Heisterbach (last accessed on April 1, 2014).

Here we encounter numerous examples of miraculous healing, regularly brought about by an individual's deep faith, or an epiphany regarding the true sanctity of a holy person. In chapter 16 of Book I, for example, where several events combine to illustrate the preaching power of Bernard of Clairvaux, we are told of a paralytic woman who, witnessing the astounding feats of that holy man, calls out to him for help. Henry, a wealthy nobleman from the Constance region who had already agreed to join a convent, places the cripple on his horse and brings her to Bernard. There she receives his blessing and undergoes a miracle healing: "She then, made whole, stood upright, and full of joy went to her home on her own feet."¹¹³

There is no explanation of the actual healing process, no medical analysis, only the simple account as reported by the narrator within the story, Henry. For Caesarius, such explanations would be unnecessary and moot because miracles are not rational phenomena and yet do occur, according to his opinion, because people demonstrate such deep faith and consequently are rewarded by the divine power through a restoration of their health.

Caesarius is mostly concerned with illustrating to his convent brothers or to his general audience outside of the monastic walls why it might be necessary, if not mandatory, to join the Cistercian, or another, community for the salvation of one's soul. But we also are given numerous examples of miraculous healing, such as in chapter 25 of Book I. A knight from the castle Altenahr, called Ludwig, already lies on his deathbed, when he is visited by the abbot of a nearby monastery. The abbot does nothing but to urge the suffering man to submit himself to the Order "and to repeat aloud the vow of conversion according to custom" (33). Miraculously, his pallor quickly passes away, a natural color returns to his face. His recovery proceeds so fast that he does not need any artificial sweating or bleeding, and he can soon be carried to the monastery, where he turns into a novice, and soon thereafter is accepted as a monk. Of course, shortly thereafter Ludwig passed away, but this outcome does not change the general observation which Caesarius tried to convey, and upon which one of his novices here

113 Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, with an Introduction by G. G. Coulton. 2 vols. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929), vol. 1, 25. For the original text, see now Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, *Dialog über die Wunder*, trans. and commentary by Nikolaus Nösges and Horst Schneider. Zweisprachige Neuausgabe christlicher Quellentexte aus Altertum und Mittelalter, 86.1–5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009). I have compared the English translation with the Latin edition and found it to be trustworthy. Caesarius employed a fairly simple narrative style, which means that we do not need to put too much weight on the original.

responds: “I gather from your words that you believe that a sick man may prolong his days by penitence and prayer” (33).

Strictly speaking, the abbot had only invited the sick man to put his hands into his own, and by creating thus a physical, or actually a spiritual, bond, he had provided the nearly dead knight enough new energy to bring him back to new life. He does not live very long thereafter, but long enough to undergo the necessary rituals transforming him into a monk. Desperation was at play before the abbot’s arrival, which then was replaced by hope, trust, and confidence, supported by a deep devotion and belief in the abbot’s supreme spiritual authority. Qualifying the novice’s statement, Caesarius goes into further detail in the subsequent exchange, emphasizing that “Since the prayers of the saints bring back life to the dead, how shall they not effect a lesser thing, and give health to those in mortal sickness?” (34).

Life is shortened for many people if they give in to the sin of pride, while humility and humbleness promise to achieve the very opposite: “it was granted to the first man that he should be immortal on condition of his obedience to God’s commands, so in the foreknowledge of God the years here are granted on condition that he live humbly and innocently before Him; for those years which pride had taken from him, humility hath restored” (34). Evilness, sinfulness, by contrast, can, if not automatically, trigger a faster turn toward death, although Caesarius does not profess to be absolutely certain about it: “Yet a man by evil life may sometimes anticipate this boundary as the Psalmists bear witness” (34; Ps. lv, 25).

The following narrative allows Caesarius to illustrate his case through a concrete case, that is, of the tyrannical Landgrave Ludwig of Thuringia, whom he explicitly charges with having committed severe crimes against his people through robbery and theft by means of his political power. Warned by his confessor about the potential consequences of his evil behavior, the Landgrave arrogantly retorted that due to predetermination his own destiny could not be changed anyway: “If I am one of the elect, no sins will be able to take from me the Kingdom of Heaven; if I am already foredoomed, no good deeds will be able to confer it upon me” (35).

However, one day Ludwig fell seriously ill and called his doctor, whom Caesarius characterizes immediately as wise not only in medicine, but also in theology. Upon the Landgrave’s command to apply all of his skills to getting him well again, the doctor, in parallel to his lord’s previous saying, retorts: “Sir, if the day of your death has come, no care of mine can save you from it; but if you are not destined to die of this sickness, all medicine will be superfluous” (36). Intriguingly, the Landgrave is struck by these words and quickly changes his mind, asking the doctor to take care both of his body and of his soul from then

on. Unfortunately, he still dies soon thereafter, but not because his new faith has failed him, but, as the narrator informs the novice, because he “made promises in words which he did not carry out in deeds” (36).

Many of the tales concern conversion, contrition, and confession, and outline numerous situations in which individuals are suffering or have committed sins, yet, through their voluntary return to the Church (or their priest) regain their health and sanity back. But there are also numerous examples of the impact which the dark forces can exert on individuals, such as in the eleventh tale of Book III, where a wine dealer is one night attacked by a female spirit, who abducts him when he refuses to join her in love making. The poor man finally manages to return home, but only on his hands and knees. And he is then no longer capable of looking at light, stays in bed, and passes away within a year (138).

Evil behavior, sinful actions, or wrongful ideas appear everywhere, and people, both clerics and lay, suffer the consequences, yet the graceful God always stands by and watches over them, if they are willing to return to the protection of the Church. For our purpose, however, we clearly observe how much Caesarius emphasizes the overarching relevance of the spiritual dimensions determining human life, playing a much bigger role than the material existence.

His miracle tales also reflect on the wide range of belief in demons and the devil, and they also provide insights into the question regarding mental health, which was closely connected with the belief system regarding demons. One of many examples would be the thirteenth tale of the fifth book where a possessed woman is brought to Siegburg in order to recover her mental health. In the presence of the priests she, or rather the devil possessing her, speaks out, revealing the truth behind her illness. Three words, circumscribing the Holy Trinity, bind the devil, and since she can point those out to the assembly, looking into a missal, we must assume that this then healed her thoroughly. We are also told: “Several of the monks present heard this, and knowing that the woman could not read, they were much edified, for they understood the force of the words” (333).

In the fourteenth tale, a young woman is possessed as well, which the narrator, according to standard concepts, explains with a reference to demons that torture her. A clerk secretly takes a bag from the altar holding some thorns from the Lord’s crown and holds it over the girl’s head. She immediately screams out aloud and reveals that those thorns are piercing her body. Unfortunately, the author withholds any further analysis of her possession and limits himself to two extraneous observations: “Those present were greatly edified, especially the sisters, because they had an unmistakable proof of two things, namely that the thorns were genuine, and that the woman was undoubtedly possessed by the devil” (334).

Two phenomena, however, then emerge that require further explanation. If demons can enter a human body, how then would we have to explain the presence of the Holy Spirit? The Monk narrator elucidates this to his student/novice in the following way: “the Holy Spirit is properly said to pass into the soul, and the other to inspire it. The Holy Spirit dwelling within the sinful soul in His essence, power and wisdom, passes into it by grace as if from near at hand. But the evil spirit, being outside it in substance as we have shown, shoots in its wickedness like an arrow, by suggesting evil and fashioning the mind to vice” (335). In essence, the evil demons can only possess the body, while the Holy Spirit is said to settle in the soul (335).

Caesarius clearly indicated through the inclusion of many stories of the same kind how much he was aware of mental health problems, though he regularly explained them in religious terms, such as in the twenty-sixth story of the fifth book. A father displays anger about his young daughter’s lack of self-control when she drinks milk, although she is only five years old. In his ill temper he curses her: “I wish you might eat the devil in your greediness!” (353–54). From that time on she was possessed by the devil and suffers from her mental illness, as we would say today, until she had grown up and had visited a church dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul (354). Even sighting the devil or a demon causes, as numerous narratives confirm, immediate sickness and threatens the victim’s life (nos. 28–30).

But sometimes Caesarius has no explanation at all and can only relay what terrifying experiences some people had had. In chapter (story) thirty-two, for instance, a poor woman is suffering from a violent husband who is an alcoholic. She never dares to go to bed until he has returned from the tavern, probably because this would guarantee that he falls asleep immediately without resorting to violence. At one point, while waiting outside of the house for her husband, she sees two men dressed in white approaching her, and one of them gave her a very hard embrace. Upon her cries these two men disappeared, but she has already lost her mind: “as soon as she saw the light, went raving mad, and terrified her daughter into loud outcries, and a few days afterwards she died” (362). Clearly, this case illustrates the poor woman’s constant stress and fear of her husband, and the resulting anxiety fantasy which made her fall sick and die. However, Caesarius then concludes: “By what judgment of God such things happen, I cannot tell” (362).¹¹⁴

114 For an extensive discussion of this and similar phenomena in the Middle Ages, see Nancy Caciola *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Conjunctions of Religion & Power in the Medieval Past (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003);

In fact, without the religious explanation offered here throughout the entire collection, we would face a ‘classical’ collection of impressive examples pertaining to mentally sick people in the twelfth century. Moreover, Caesarius proves to be a master storyteller reflecting on ever changing situations and conditions leading to people’s sickness and psychological problems. Chapter thirty-three relates the events surrounding a lay-brother’s death in the Cistercian Order who was taking a mid-day rest in the dormitory together with his fellow brothers. One of them, identified as deeply pious, suddenly observed how a ghostly figure in the shape of a Benedictine nun appeared, approached the bed of the lay-brother, embraced him with her arms, and placed kisses on his mouth, before disappearing again. The observer rushes to the other man’s bed and finds him deeply asleep, yet also “lying in a fashion that was both immodest and exposed” (363). Soon enough, when the bell rings to remind the monks of vesper and the need to do their church prayers, the lay-brother feels ill, is taken to the infirmary, and then dies within three days.

The subsequent conversation reveals how Caesarius interprets the situation, pointing out that dreams or sleepwalks would reflect hidden thoughts and make visible what feelings had filled the person during the day: “so in his sleep he may make an outward manifestation of the thoughts on which he has been dwelling while awake” (363). Very much in line with standard medieval theology, the author affirms the existence of evil spirits, next to good ones, i.e., angels: “Not holy angels alone, but evil spirits also, are about us at night, and if by negligence or laxity it should happen that we are lying on our beds in unseemly fashion, we put the good to flight, and invite the evil to mock us” (363). Undoubtedly, the author here also alludes to sexual phantasies and imaginations that torture people especially if their natural needs are repressed.

In his own life he also experienced miracles, as we learn from an autobiographical narrative about his youth (book 10, chapter 44). At one point he experienced an illness that threatened his life. The priest had already anointed him several time, but he had recovered again, yet only to teeter between life and death for a long time. Finally some people advised his mother to resort to an alternative method of healing. His aunt had bought and then let a slave girl be baptized. That

see also the contributions to *Communicating with the Spirit*, ed. Éva Pócs and Gábor Klaniczay. Demons, Spirits, Witches, 1 (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005). For a discussion of spirituality as the essential clue that holds together monastic communities, see now the collection of articles by Klaus Schreiner, *Gemeinsam leben: Spiritualität, Lebens- und Verfassungsformen klösterlicher Gemeinschaften in Kirche und Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*, ed. Gert Melville together with Mirko Breitenstein. Vita regularis – Ordnungen und Deutungen religiösen Lebens im Mittelalter. Abhandlungen, 53 (Münster, Berlin, et al.: LIT, 2013).

holy water was supposed to help young Caesarius, as it actually did, when he was wrapped with the sheet that had been dipped in the baptismal font. In his own words: “This was done and at the touch of that most holy water I at once broke out into a sweat and became well. For although baptism is medicine for the soul, yet many have found its virtue a cure for their bodies” (2, 208).

A final example may suffice to illustrate clearly enough the extent to which for Caesarius and his audience true faith could create miracles and save people’s lives even under the most extreme circumstances. In the fifty-second tale of book ten, we hear of a catastrophe in a silver mine in the diocese of Trier, where a landslide kills one worker from the upper ledge within three days. The other man, on the lower level, is completely covered by soil and rocks, and presumed dead for sure. His widow, though poor, burns incense for the salvation of his soul for a whole year, neglecting her service for her killed husband only three days. When an exploratory team examines the mine again, they happen to hit upon the buried man who is still alive, a true miracle. He explains the reason for his survival as follows: “Every day at such an hour I was so sufficiently refreshed by an aromatic perfume that the whole of that day until the same hour I had no desire to eat or drink” (2, 214).

Caesarius never tired, so it seems, of telling ever new miracle stories, and he perceived his world as permeated by God’s working at all times. There is no way for us to verify anything that he related, but as a successful writer who easily appealed to his constantly growing audience he obviously contributed to the general faith in miracles and provided countless examples of their actual happening, as far as he could tell. The *Dialogus miraculorum* thus emerges as a most valuable narrative repository of literary reflections about mental health, spirituality, and religion.

XIII Hildegard of Bingen: Mystical Visionary, Medical Doctor, and Poet

If we turn to mystical literature, we encounter many further examples of how medieval people viewed the universe, that is, as a cosmos where the individual is held up by divine inspiration, corresponding in his microcosmic existence by the macrocosmic dimension. This concept was first fully developed by Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604) in his interpretation of the gospel of Mark 16:15 and eagerly picked up by the medieval scholars, such as Albertus Magnus (1193/1206–1280) in his commentary of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de causis*, who argued that there is a universal soul which carries out all movements in the cosmos. For him, like for many of his successors, there is the *causa prima*, *intelligentia*, the *anima nobilis*

(or soul), and *natura*. Konrad von Megenberg (1309–1374), in his *Buch der Natur*, diversified that system further, dividing it into the *vernunft* (reason, or rather, angel), *himelweger* (passages through the heavens, or rather, the soul, sometimes the heart), then *paum vnd chraeuter* [trees and plants], or rather, nutrition), and *staine vnd gesmeid* [stones and gems], or rather, the elements).¹¹⁵

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) formulated some of the most remarkable images about this concept, especially in her *Liber Divinorum Operum* (Book of Divine Works). Hildegard does not necessarily address miraculous healing, but describes the very essence of human nature as a divine being: “We understand this unitary *opus* when we see how the soul brings air to its bodily organism through its thought processes. It brings warmth through every power of concentration; it brings fire through the intake of matter; in addition, it brings water by incorporating water materials and greening power (*viriditas*) through the process of procreation. And we humans are put together in this way at the first moment of creation. Up above and down below, on the outside as well as on the inside, and everywhere – we exist as corporeal beings. And this is our essence.”¹¹⁶

For Hildegard, all human beings are, not surprisingly, God’s greatest creations, and yet they stand, as she perceived it, between the vast cosmos of spirituality and the mundane existence here on earth. As Heinrich Schipperges described it, “As a reflection of the cosmos (*speculum universi*) humanity was destined to bring its potentialities to reality. And as a rational being (*homo rationalis*) humankind engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the cosmos and was responsible for

115 Dagmar Gottschall, *Konrad von Megenbergs Buch von den natürlichen Dingen: Ein Dokument deutschsprachiger Albertus Magnus-Rezeption im 14. Jahrhundert*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, LXXXIII (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 248–53. For the historical-critical edition, see Konrad von Megenberg, *Das Buch der Natur*, ed. Robert Luff and Georg Steer. Text und Textgeschichte, 54 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003).

116 *Liber divinorum operum* IV, 103; here cited from Heinrich Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen: Healing and the Nature of the Cosmos*, trans. from the German by John A. Broadwin (1995; Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), 39. See also the contributions to *Hildegard von Bingen in ihrem historischen Umfeld: Internationaler wissenschaftlicher Kongreß zum 900jährigen Jubiläum, 13.–19. September 1998, Bingen am Rhein*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Alexander Reverchon (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2000); “*Im Angesicht Gottes suche der Mensch sich selbst*”: *Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)*, ed. Rainer Berndt. *Erudiri Sapientia*, II (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001); Anne H. King-Lenzmeier, *Hildegard of Bingen: An Integrated Vision* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001); Victoria Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture (New York: Routledge, 2006); Rainer Berndt and Maura Zátonyi, *Glaubensheil: Wegweisung ins Christentum gemäss der Lehre Hildegards von Bingen*. *Erudiri Sapientia*, 10 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013). The research literature on Hildegard is, of course, legion.

the salvation of the whole world (*homo responsurus*).¹¹⁷ Hence there is complete harmony and order, and human suffering and pain can easily be addressed through a spiritual exploration, reconnecting the individual creature with the cosmic whole. All being are the result of the divine creation, and all live here on earth to realize the divine potential of all existence. “The nature of human beings was explicable only on the basis of their connection to the cosmos.

Just as the Son of God dwelled in the heart of the Father, so humanity stood at the center of the world (LDO IX, 9).¹¹⁸ Although at first look it might sound like Hildegard drew her inspiration basically from nature itself, recent scholarship has clearly recognized the theological orientation, with God being the total source for this *viriditas*. In fact, Peter Dronke now calls her fundamental concept a “sacramental universe” in which the four elements collaborate and contribute to a “cosmic sympathy.”¹¹⁹ In a way, she developed her worldview in light of the tradition based on the correlation of microcosm with macrocosm, and she argued, particularly in her medical treatise *De Physica*, in light of the teachings pertaining to the four elements, fire, water, soil, and air.¹²⁰

117 Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 39.

118 Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 43.

119 Peter Dronke, “The Four Elements in the Thought of Hildegard of Bingen: Cosmology and Poetry,” *Studi medievali* LIV.2 (2013): 905–22; here 909 and 911. He also adds, in his abstract, the valuable observation: “The elements are not simply used to illustrate macrocosmic and microcosmic parallels: they are portrayed as constantly penetrating and participating in beings and events in the macrocosm and the microcosm, and in the process of creation, fall and redemption. Hildegard attributes to the elements a ‘cosmic sympathy’; in this she was inspired in part by moments in the *Pharsalia* of Lucan. In a group of songs in her *Symphonia* she goes further: there the elements become as it were actors in a drama, heralding and responding to human joys and sorrows” (922). I would like to express my gratitude to the editorial staff of *Studi medievali* to let me have a PDF copy of Dronke’s article when it was still not available in our library. See further Renate Craine, *Hildegard, Prophet of the Cosmic Christ*. The Crossroad Spiritual Legacy Series (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Victoria Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 134–54.

120 Barbara Fehringer, *Das Speyrer Kräuterbuch mit den Heilpflanzen Hildegards von Bingen: Eine Studie zur mittelhochdeutschen Physica-Rezeption mit kritischer Ausgabe des Textes*. Würzburger medizinhistorische Forschungen, Beiheft 2 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), 48–49. See now Hildegard von Bingen, *Physica: Liber subtilitatum diversarum naturarum creaturarum, textkritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Hildebrandt and Thomas Gloning. 2 vols. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010). There is no shortage of related herbals from the Middle Ages; see, for instance, Heinrich Ebel, *Der “Herbarius communis” des Hermannus de Sancto Portu und das “Arzneibüchlein” des Claus von Metry. Textübertragung aus den Codices bibl. Acad. Ms. 674, Erlangen und Pal. Germ. 215, Heidelberg. Zwei Beiträge zur Erkenntnis des Wesens mit-*

The mystic identified a wide range of sins and vices in human beings and described them as the catalysts for the loss of the human soul: “when men choose to be disobedient, they not only stand in rebellion, but they also move from disobedience into rebellion. In the same way they move boldly from one thing to another, having been stirred up by the deeds of the devil where all the perversities of all the faults have been moved to the commotion of agitation, because through the evil of disobedience, they draw all the other faults to themselves.”¹²¹ She describes, in other words, a theology according to which all physical shortcomings and suffering are intimately associated with the failure of the soul to maintain the divine laws.

In her *Hildegardis Causae et curae* (Hildegard’s Causes and Cures), the visionary and scientific author expounded on her concept of all human existence, which she perceived in light of the four elements, and hence the four humors. This led her to outline how much the human body “corresponded to the forces of the universe and paralleled the world of the senses and the life of grace.”¹²² For pragmatic matters, she explained further that body and soul are intimately interconnected because the soul rests in every part of the material body: “The soul was the active principle within the body (*opus corporis*); it rejoiced in its deeds and expressed itself though [sic; through] the body’s activities (*opera corporis*).”¹²³ All elements in this world serve the human creature, and the latter works with them to achieve God’s wish in a cosmological sense: “In this reciprocal arrangement the earth released its life-determining force (*viriditas*) according to the particular type and nature of human being involved, its mode of thinking and way of life.”¹²⁴

If people severed this natural relationship, or broke with nature, they were liable to get sick and suffer – probably a universal experience as formulated by writers and scholars since antiquity.¹²⁵ “Disease was the outward sign of depres-

telalterlicher Volksbotanik. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften, 1 (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1940).

121 Hildegard of Bingen, *The Book of the Rewards of Life (Liber Vitae Meritorum)*, trans. Bruce W. Hozeski. The Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York and London: Garland, 1994), 145.

122 Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 47.

123 Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 48.

124 Quoted from Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 65.

125 Klaus Bergdolt, *Wellbeing: A Cultural History of Healthy Living* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2008). As to Hildegard’s particular contribution, see now also *Hildegard von Bingen’s Physica: The Complete English Translation of her Classic Work on Health and Healing*, trans. from the Latin by Priscilla Throop (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1998); Wighard Strehlow, *Hildegard of Bingen’s Spiritual Remedies* (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2002). See also the contributions to 1st International Conference “Traditional Medicine and Materia Medica in Medieval Manuscripts” ([Baku] Heydar Aliyev Foundation, 2006).

sion and insanity, and Hildegard interpreted it as an excessive increase in black bile (*melancholia*).¹²⁶ Hence, according to her interpretation, disease was not a pathogenic process, but the result of deficiencies and neglect, i.e., the disregard of the cosmic context and relationship. The microcosmic being cannot survive without being fully integrated into the macrocosmic essence, which the author regularly expressed with the color of green, *viriditas*.¹²⁷ Again in Schipperges's words, "Just as Hildegard viewed life as a continuation of creation (*creatio continua*), she regarded health as a process of continual regeneration drawing upon the very wellsprings of life, an ongoing life-giving process that embraced and overlay all the spheres of nature and the spirit. The aim of life was to produce a well-rounded person."¹²⁸

In other words, she was a strong proponent of a life lived both in matter and in spirit, and only if both dimensions merged was the true goal, as foretold by the Holy Spirit, achieved. However, she always admonished her audience to observe moderation and to be humble in all endeavors, not to be too extreme in the quest for spiritual glorification and in leading one's life according to one's needs and abilities. In her own words: "Only those who plow with moderation (*per discretionem*) the field that is their body will not be devastated when death suddenly overtakes them, for the music of the Holy Spirit (*symphonia Spiritus Sancti*) and a life filled with joy (*laeta vita*) await them. Yet one must be careful not to destroy one's body by working too hard. Always remember that you cannot create another human being."¹²⁹

All these remarks do not, of course, make Hildegard to a modern guru of health care, an alternative medical practitioner, as many popular writers nowadays like to suggest, but she certainly outlined, perhaps more insightfully than many others at her time, how much the individual has to observe the well-being both of his/her body and his/her soul in order to achieve spiritual and physical fulfillment. Many other theologians, including mystics such as Henry Suso, rather emphasized the great value of suffering as the pathway toward a God-pleasing

¹²⁶ Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 66.

¹²⁷ Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 68. See also Bernhard Dietrich Haage, "Naturphilosophische Grundlagen der Pflanzenheilkunde im Mittelalter," *Mediaevistik* 26 (forthcoming). For a good survey, see also Rudolf Allers, *Microcosmus: From Anaximandros to Paracelsus*. Traditio. Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion, 2 (New York: Fordham University, 1944), 319–407. See also the contribution to this volume by David Tomiček, who explores medical and mental-physical recommendations by late medieval Czech writers.

¹²⁸ Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 77.

¹²⁹ Quoted from Schipperges, *Hildegard of Bingen* (see note 116), 83. This originates from a letter that she had written to an abbess at Elostat, contained in PL 214 C/D.

life, and did not endeavor to outline moderate ways in this life to enjoy health in the full sense of the word.

As we learn from Suso (Heinrich Seuse), who has Eternal Wisdom speak to him: “Every sick person imagines that he is the worst off of all, and every needy person thinks that he is the poorest. If I had given you other suffering, the same thing would happen. Surrender yourself freely to my will in all suffering that I want from you, without excepting this or that suffering. Don’t you know that I only want the best for you as much as you yourself do?”¹³⁰

In her *Physica*, composed between 1151 and 1158, Hildegard offers a wide range of very specific explanations how to handle medical problems and how to maintain a healthy body by way of harmonizing the physical with the spiritual aspects.¹³¹ All of life is connected, as she emphasizes, almost too simplistically, as it seems at first sight, with the earth: “The earth gave its vital energy, according to each person’s race, nature, habits, and environment. Through the beneficial herbs, the earth brings forth the range of mankind’s spiritual powers and distinguishes between them” (9). All aspects in nature are, for Hildegard, directly correlated to the parts that make up the human body, hence true healing begins by way of understanding how each element requires energy and support from plants, woods, or stones in nature. For instance: “The earth’s stones can be compared to human bones, and their wetness is like bone marrow, since a moist stone also has heat” (9). Without specifying it explicitly at this point, Hildegard underlines again how much all existence is determined by the interaction between the microcosm and the macrocosm, an interaction which, in a way, only a mystic can fully comprehend – but see the comments by Paracelsus further below.

As unscientific as Hildegard’s recommendation and recipes might sound for modern ears, they prove to be quite logical within their own context and might have had the desired effect if individuals were to believe in them. Referring to a mentally sick person, “vexed by insanity” (11), the author recommends to “take the whole grains of wheat and cook them in water. Remove these cooked grains from the water, and place them around his whole head, tying a cloth over them.

130 Henry Suso, “Little Book of Eternal Wisdom,” id., *The Exemplar, with Two German Sermons*, trans., ed., and intro. by Frank Tobin. Preface by Bernard McGinn (New York and Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1989), 246. Suso has been studied from many different perspectives, so suffice to note this one comment. For a trenchant analysis, see Kurt Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*. Vol. 3: *Die Mystik des deutschen Predigerordens und ihre Grundlegung durch die Hochscholastik* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996), 417–75.

131 Hildegard von Bingen’s *Physica: The Complete English Translation of Her Classic Work on Health and Healing*, trans. from the Latin by Priscilla Throop (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1998).

His brain will be reinvigorated by their vital fluid, and he may recover his health and strength. Do this until he returns to his right mind” (11). The conviction with which she formulated this recipe is striking, and we may assume that it might even have worked because of the aura and charisma which this learned, but also very spiritual person exuded. Others, such as the Archbishop of Cologne, Heribert (d. 1021), resorted to simple prayer and achieved the desired effect, healing the insane from their suffering, forcing the devils residing in him, to flee, which is a powerful medieval metaphor for spiritual treatment of mental problems.¹³²

We do not need to pursue Hildegard’s medicinal teachings in further details; instead suffice here to conclude how much medieval writers like her were deeply convinced of the close interaction between the material and the spiritual world, here represented by the nature and properties of individual plants, animals, reptiles, stones, and metals. According to Victoria Sweet’s analysis, Hildegard, and with her most of her contemporaries, firmly believed in the intimate correlation between humors and specific strengths and functions of natural objects and creatures. “But elements, qualities, and humors were also linked by the way the premodern, pre-Copernican universe was supposed to work – as firmament that revolved around a fixed earth. It was this movement, and the movements of sun, moon, and stars, that created the external conditions of seasons, weather, and climate. And these were what mainly determined the health and sickness of body and plant.”¹³³

Hildegard’s teachings were, of course, not unique for her time, and we find countless confirmations of the same or similar teachings in contemporary or subsequent medical treatises, such as in the *Speyerer Kräuterbuch* from 1456, today kept in the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, as mgf 817. To study the proper nature of herbs and other plants makes possible, according to the author of that tract, to recognize and bring to light an individual’s good virtues and strengths by means of “nützen krutter[,]” while bad, or “vnnützen krutter[.]” reveal a human’s devilish features. Hence, a close examination of the properties and attributes of all plants allows to bring out the best or the worst in people. In other words, this medical-pharmacological approach, typical of the Middle Ages, was predicated on an understanding of this material, biological world as representative, if not symbolic, of human life in all its values and ideals.¹³⁴

132 Mumelter, *Vita Heriberti* (see note 72), ch. 17, 96–97.

133 Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth* (see note 119), 156.

134 Barbara Fehringer, *Das Speyerer Kräuterbuch mit den Heilpflanzen Hildegards von Bingen: Eine Studie zur mittelhochdeutschen Physica-Rezeption mit kritischer Ausgabe des Textes*.

XIV Mourning in Late Medieval Texts

In order to illuminate the issues that I have explored so far in more specific ways, and in order to take us to the late Middle Ages, that is, to the threshold of the early modern age, next I want to examine more carefully how two late-medieval writers from roughly the same time, Johannes von Tepl and Christine de Pizan, dealt with the loss of the loved one. We learn in Johann's text, *The Plowman*, that death has taken his wife; and we hear from Christine in her various *ballades* and particularly in her *Mutation de Fortune* that death has robbed her of her husband. Both writers were suddenly faced with the question of how to handle this tragic situation, and both writers apparently succeeded in finding answers to the challenge of death that are worth listening to until today. Finally, both writers composed their texts at roughly the same time, around 1400, the first in Prague, using a variant of early modern German, the latter in Paris, relying on her mother tongue, medieval French.

Both authors, Johannes and Christine, have been recognized as major spokespersons of their time and culture, but while the latter is fairly well known through numerous autobiographical references in her own work, Johann has not left many biographical clues. I will first discuss this writer and his famous dialogue poem *The Plowman*, before I turn to Christine de Pizan and her remarkable poems, often specifically autobiographical, in which she reflected on the meaning of death, on the loss of her husband, and on the subsequent demands on her as a single woman, a widow who had to take care of her family without the help of her deceased husband.

XV The German Example: Johannes of Tepl's *Plowman*

Johannes was born around 1350 in western Bohemia (today Czech Republic) and he lived in the city of Saaz (south of Marienbad and west of Prague) since 1378, working as a city notary and subsequently as rector of the Latin school. In 1386 he was appointed imperial notary. Then he appears to have received the title of Master from the university, though we do not know whether he attended the university of Prague (founded in 1348), of Bologna, Padua, or Paris. While still living in Saaz, Tepl's wife Margaretha died, the subject of his famous dialogue poem. In 1411 he moved to Prague to work as a notary of the Neustadt district and bought a

Würzburger medizinhistorische Forschungen, Beiheft 2 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), 44.

house in Prague itself, perhaps then already remarried. He died there sometime between 1414 and 1415. We know of a surviving widow, Clara, and several children.

According to a letter which Tepl had sent to his friend Peter Rothers of Prague some time between 1400 and 1411, perhaps, however, already before 1404, the *Plowman* was a rhetorical exercise, and not necessarily an autobiographical reflection. Nevertheless, it would not make too much sense in our context to differentiate between both aspects because they do not exclude each other and actually overlap in many regards.¹³⁵ The critical point here is that Johann reflects on the loss of his wife and provides us, through the intensive debate with Death, an extraordinary opportunity to study the enormous grief and pain which a widower is going through and to comprehend, on top of that, to trace how that individual manages to work his way through the long morning process and achieve a kind of healing of his soul, which André Schnyder correctly identified, resorting to a Freudian term, as *Trauerarbeit*.¹³⁶

135 Anne Winston-Allen, "Johannes von Tepl (Johannes von Saaz)," *German Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation, 1280–1580*, ed. James Hardin and Max Reinhart. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 179 (Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1997), 287–92. Werner Schuder, *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen: Eine literatur- und buchhistorische Betrachtung* (Berlin: Berliner Bibliophilen Abend e.V., 1997), offers another concise introduction to the text, rich in details and sober in its critical assessment. For the composition of the dialogue poem, see Gerhard Hahn, *Die Einheit des Ackermann aus Böhmen: Studien zur Komposition*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 5 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1963).

136 André Schnyder, "Die Trauerarbeit des Witwers: Vorläufiger Versuch, ein altbekanntes Werk neu zu sehen," *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft* 4 (1986/87): 25–39. For a trustworthy text edition, see Johannes von Tepl. *Der ackerman*, ed. Willy Krogmann. Sec. ed. Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 1 (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1964). For pragmatic reasons I will quote from this edition; but cf. also the by now best critical edition, Johannes de Tepla, Civis Zacensis, *Epistola cum Libello ackerman und Das büchlein ackerman: Nach der Freiburger Hs. 163 und nach der Stuttgarter Hs. HB X 23*, ed. and trans. Karl Bertau Vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); for an English translation, see Johannes von Saaz. *The Plowman from Bohemia*. In the Original Early New High German and in English. Trans. Alexander and Elizabeth Henderson. Introduction by Reinhold Schneider (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966). Cf. also Johannes von Tepl, *Death and the Ploughman: A Confrontation Between Man and Death, Resolved by the Judgement of God*, a trans. Rosalind Hibbins (Oxford: Lindsay Ross, 2000). I will consult this trans. for the text analysis. For a comprehensive analysis of the social-historical context of this dialogue poem, see Christian Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität. Der 'Ackermann' des Johannes von Tepl und die Ambiguität historischen Wandels*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 113 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998). For a solid discussion of the dialogic aspects, see Walter Haug, "Der Ackermann und der Tod," *Das Gespräch*. Ed. Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning. Poetik und Hermeneutik, 11 (Munich: Fink, 1984), 281–86; for the history of research, see Gerhard Hahn, *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen des Johannes von*

Previous research has intensively fought over the question of whether Tepl's *Ackermann* belongs already to the early stages of the Renaissance, but in Bohemia, or whether his work still reflects the last vestiges of the late Middle Ages.¹³⁷ The critical aspect of this dialogue poem, however, at least in light of our investigations, consists of the poet's attempt to create a literary framework in which he could negotiate with Death the question of how to cope with the loss of a beloved wife. Mourning is here identified as an existential challenge that does not provide easy, if any, answers. After all, as we can observe from the start, the Plowman appears as a deeply upset person who cannot tolerate the thought that his beloved wife and the mother of his children has passed away. Whether this narrative was composed shortly after Margaretha's death, or years later, should not concern us because *The Plowman* provides answers for people at all times and in all cultures as to how to handle this intense pain resulting from the death of a beloved person.

There is no doubt that Tepl presents his work as a masterpiece of rhetorical exercise, as it teems with literary references and proves to be skillfully and artistically composed and structured. It is, after all, a fictional work, and not an autobiographical confession, despite the numerous autobiographical clues contained in the text. Nevertheless, to reiterate the critical point, *The Plowman* illustrates

Tepl. Erträge der Forschung, 215 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984). There is a myriad of older and more recent scholarship on this 'canonical' text, which does not need to be cited here in detail. But see, for instance, Hildegunde Gehrke, *Die Begriffe "Mittelalter", "Humanismus" und "Renaissance" in den Interpretationen des "Ackermann aus Böhmen"*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 708 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2004); Albrecht Dröse, *Die Poetik des Widerstreits: Konflikt und Transformation der Diskurse im 'Ackermann' des Johannes von Tepl*. Studien zur historischen Poetik, 10 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012).

137 Albrecht Classen, "Der *Ackermann aus Böhmen* – ein literarisches Zeugnis aus einer Schwellenzeit: Mittelalterliches Streitgespräch oder Dokument des neuzeitlichen Bewußtseins?," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 110.3 (1991): 348–73; Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität* (see note 136), 13–34; he contradicts himself, however, profoundly at a later point and suddenly, though only indirectly, accepts my own position, 331–67, especially 363: "Damit rückt der 'Ackermann'-Dialog, indem er die Behauptungsfähigkeit des Menschen in und angesichts der Welt in den Blick nimmt, plötzlich doch in die Nähe von 'De remedii'." Johannes von Tepl entwirft wie Petrarca das Bild der Schlechtigkeit der Welt nicht, um den Rückzug aus ihr zu propagieren, vielmehr um den Menschen auf sich selbst als (außer Gott) einzig sicheren Anhalt zu verpflichten" (Thus the 'Plowman'-Dialogue, by taking into consideration people's ability to make statements within and in face of the world, suddenly moves into the vicinity of 'De remedii.' Johannes of Teple projects, like Petrarch, the image of the evil nature of the world not in order to propagate the withdrawal from it, but instead to commit people to themselves (except for God) as the only stable reference).

powerfully the central concern that I am pursuing here, the coming to terms with human suffering, pain, mourning, and grief.

Death is the natural opponent, being the culprit, the one who took the Plowman's wife. And he proves to be a superior opponent, untouched by any of the accusations or charges. Almighty Death refuses to give any ground in the entire debate until a certain point, which I will discuss below. At first, both face each other in a hostile manner, the Plowman screaming at Death as the perpetrator who caused him enormous pain. Indeed, he has lost all control and resorts to curse words that roll out of his mouth like a cascade. Bitterly he complains about Death as an unjust, gruesome, unfair, murderous entity that should be hated by God Himself. He wishes that Death should disappear in the ground, suffocate in the hellish abyss, and he condemns him in the vilest possible language.

Death is unmoved by this excessive outburst and only inquires, calmly, about the reason for this uncalled for attack, whereupon the Plowman introduces himself briefly and then identifies the victim, his wife, whom he praises in most laudatory terms, thus creating a paean on the good wife, a new theme in early modern literature.¹³⁸ Death ought to admit that he committed a great injustice to the Plowman, that is, everyman, by depriving him of his wife, the source of all of his joy and delight, the root of all of his happiness by day and night. With her death he is facing only sorrow, depression, misery, sadness, and tears. Most impressively, with her loss, the Plowman's metaphorical ship of life is floating uncontrollably on the sea, with the anchor not helping to find a hold: "Also treibet mich der wind, ich swimme dahin durch des wilden meres flut, die tünnen haben überhand genommen, mein anker haftet ninder" (III, 103; "I am blown by the wind, tossed by the wild current of the sea, the waves have overcome me, my anchor has no hold").

As scholarship has recognized already for some time, Tepl offers a remarkable praise of the wife, identifying her as his "bright star in heaven" (5), as the "sun of my salvation" and as his "morning star" (ibid.). Moreover, she is his "true diamond" (5), his "guiding staff" (5), as "an excellent gift of God, which none but

138 Rüdiger Schnell, "Die Frau als Gefährtin ('socia') des Mannes: Eine Studie zur Interdependenz von Textsorte, Adressat und Auge," *Geschlechterbeziehungen und Textfunktionen: Studien zu Eheschriften der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. id. Frühe Neuzeit, 40 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 119–70; Albrecht Classen, *Der Liebes- und Ehediskurs vom hohen Mittelalter bis zum frühen 17. Jahrhundert*. Volksliedstudien, 5 (Münster, New York, Munich, and Berlin: Waxmann, 2005); Shannon McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Albrecht Classen, "Family and Kinship in Early Modern German Prose Novels: Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine* and the Anonymous *Fortunatus*," to appear in *Orbis Litterarum*.

God alone can give” (7). Resorting to typically medieval images, he identifies her as “my prized falcon” (7) and describes her as the ideal mother and wife: “she was noble of birth, very popular, lovely, industrious and grown as a person more than her comrades, true and chaste in speech, physically modest, a good and cheerful companion” (7). Turning to her role as mother, he resorts to the typical animal metaphor: “The hen who raised such chicks is dead” (9), and then portrays her in strongly religious terms: “Honourable man, rejoice in your fair woman, fair woman, rejoice in your honourable man: God give joy to you both” (10).

The Plowman gushes forth a true crescendo of ever new praise of his wife who was a true blessing by God: “She was tireless, my healing medicine for every ill, God’s servant, attendant to my desires, tender of my body, watcher day and night over my honour and hers. Whatever was entrusted to her she returned, complete, pure and undamaged, often in greater measure” (11). Adding to all these already very positive features, the Plowman goes so far as to associate her with a whole catalogue of virtues and values: “Honour, breeding, chastity, gentleness, loyalty, measure, care and modesty were always in her home; modesty always reflected honour before her, God was her best protector” (11–12).

At this point I deliberately ignore the responses provided by Death, who remains aloof and almost disrespectful because he is not really challenged or regards these attacks as unworthy of him getting involved in a fight. However, with chapter 13, the Plowman turns away from the direct loss and his effort to praise his dead wife, and he turns to a kind of self-analysis of his suffering and pain: “Deprived of love, I have accustomed myself to grief; I must suffer this at your hands for as long as God wishes. However obtuse I am, however little I can do, however little wisdom is chalked up to me among great thinkers, I know for sure that you are the robber of my social standing, the thief of my joys, the stealer of the good days of my life, the annihilator of my delight and destroyer of all that made my life delightful and worthy of esteem” (13–14). He concludes with the exasperating realization that there is no chance for him to recoup his previous happiness, his love, and his delight: “Hin ist hin!” (112; “What is gone is gone!,” 14).

Tepl’s dialogue poem demonstrates a profound psychological understanding of the deep inner pain and torment which the protagonist is going through. We would have to refrain, of course, from an attempt to read this text as an autobiography, a highly problematic concept in that historical context anyway since the rhetorical and stylistic elements clearly identify the dialogue as an artistic exercise, as Tepl confirmed himself in the famous letter to his friend Peter Rother.¹³⁹ But whatever the situation might be, what matters for us is that here,

139 Krogmann, ed., *Der ackermann* (see note 136), 9–11.

in chapter 13, the Plowman engages in a form of self-analysis, trying to achieve a catharsis through the dialogue with Death: “In misery, alone and full of pain I remain without compensation from you; no restoration could be forthcoming from you to me after such great wrong” (14).

The dialogic structure allows the author to have the protagonist turn all his anger toward the elusive figure of Death, who is blatantly accused of having brought this misery and pain upon the widower: “What are you like, Master Death, breaker of the marriages of all? No-one can earn any good from you, or find good in you; no-one will ever offend against you enough; no-one would compensate you for it” (14). In his desperation, the Plowman even appeals to God to avenge him against Death and to serve as a judge in the eternal court trial of life and death: “So judge for me against cruel Death, God, righter of all wrongs” (14; “Got, aller untat gerecher!,” 112). While the Plowman has at first raised a hue and cry against the opponent for having robbed him of his wife, he then begins to challenge Death for its general wrongdoings, as he perceives it. At the same time he slowly turns away from his own grief and begins to ask Death about his nature and essence, a veritable process of psychological healing in poetic-literary form. Not only does he appeal to God to succor him in his efforts to fend off Death, to get him to admit his failures, and to confess his error when he took the Plowman’s wife, he also charges him with unfair and uneven treatment of people, of favoring the rich and powerful, and of being a murderer: “You have murdered them all, and my dearest with them – the despicable ones are still here. Whose fault is that” (20). In other words, the Plowman is moving from the specific charges to general ones, claiming that Death represents the injustice of this world.

While the first part of this dialogue poem was clearly based on the Plowman’s personal suffering, at least in a literary context, the middle section clearly moves us away from the individual case to global concerns with death, lack of fairness, injustice, then turns even to a direct challenge, if not warning: “He who does evil and then will not be suppressed or submit to and accept punishment, but instead arrogantly spurns every approach, should watch out that afterwards he does not meet with resentment!” (23). Significantly, the Plowman gets increasingly self-assertive and aggressive, taking charge and condemning Death for an actual wrongdoing. In fact, he goes so far as to claim a higher moral or ethical ground: “Even now I still wish to prove myself better than you” (23), because he has suffered more than anyone else, which is, of course, not at all true. But we observe a rapprochement of the position with Devil, who finally goes so far as to urge his opponent to employ a more constructive language: “patience brings honour; an angry man can never discern the truth. If you had spoken to Me in such friendly tones before, I would have responded with friendliness, to show you that it is not right that you should lament and mourn the death of your wife as you do” (24).

Most importantly, in the following chapter the Plowman comes out of his cloud of pain and begins to inquire about the situation that he is in, and begs Death for guidance: “So, if a good critic can also be a good guide, advise and direct me: how can I dig up, root out and throw off such unspeakable pain, such wretched misery, such immeasurably great distress from my heart, my will and my mind?” (26). Unfortunately, Death only responds mockingly and haughtily, and even claims full victory because “life is created for death; if there were no life, I would not exist” (27). Moreover, in the crucial chapter 24 Death even dismisses the human body as completely worthless and as nothing but a container of filth and rotting flesh (30–31).

For the Plowman this proves to be the ultimate chance to defend himself and human life effectively, and he manages, surprisingly perhaps, but certainly successfully, to counter Death’s argument so thoroughly that the latter suddenly sees himself on the defense, so that he rejects not only all the aspects he had relied on himself at first, such as logic, grammar, and philosophy (not quite in the sense of the *trivium*), but also the black arts, that is necromancy, and other occult sciences.

The Plowman produces the crucial proof that life is worth living, that the body is really a “masterwork” and that Death’s comments were nothing but slander of God Himself (32). In fact, we no longer hear of mourning and grieving, because the debate has turned away from individual suffering to the question regarding the meaning of all life: “Humanity alone possesses that greatest treasure, reason, and is the sole physical entity whose like only God can create, wherein can be found great skill, art and mastery, formed with wisdom” (33–34).

Of course, Death does not simply accept this position, which threatens to undermine his own position in the debate, but he only resorts to the desperate method of condemning all human sciences and wisdom, that is, even his own previous arguments predicated on logic and rationality. Ultimately, of course, at the end God Himself declares Death the winner in this debate, but He assigns honor to the Plowman because he has defended life and the virtues of creation so valiantly.

Tepl’s dialogue poem concludes with a rather philosophical outlook on the world, on life and death, which we could associate with the rise of Renaissance thought north of the Alps, which scholars have pointed out already for a long time.¹⁴⁰ For our purposes, however, we can also recognize another, very remarkable aspect because by means of his dialogue with Death the Plowman learns a fundamental lesson, which appeals to modern readers as well. Through his mourning, here powerfully expressed through the exchanges with Death, the Plowman

140 Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität* (see note 136), 460–70.

comes to terms with his inner feelings, with his love for his deceased wife, with the basic human suffering, and in the course of the exchange with his opponent he begins to grow as a human being, gaining the inner strength necessary to face the worst situation in life, death. While the Plowman proves to be a victim of his excessive grief at the beginning, the literary exchange facilitates the individual's growth, freeing itself from the constraints of emotions, allowing rational thought, still deeply sustained by the Christian faith, to sustain human life and making it possible to regain a constructive view toward life. Both the experience of having lost his wife, and the altercation with Death make the Plowman grow strong and to develop the critical philosophical concept that signals that the reliance on the poetic word provides the most important tool in human existence to sustain all the pain, suffering, and sorrow unfortunately so intimately associated with life itself.

Intriguingly, God judges both parties in this debate as wrong in their basic assumptions: "One is lamenting what is not his own, the other is boasting of a power which is not his by right. However, there has been some source for dispute, and you have both fought well: sorrow forced one party to complain and the other had to respond to the charge with truth. Therefore, complainant, you have the honor! Death, you have the victory!" (47). As religious as this outcome certainly sounds, Tepl does not return simply to the fold of the Catholic Church, in the way that Pope Innocent III had famously formulated in his *De miseria humanae conditionis* (1195) and which Death repeats here in many fashions.¹⁴¹ Instead, he clearly distances himself from the contemptuous position toward human life and praises it as God's greatest creation, which justifies, in the long run, the lengthy diatribes against Death and his scoffing of human existence. Essentially, then, Tepl's *Plowman* facilitates the most important critical examination of our identity, our *raison d'être*, our relationship with God, and of the relevance of love and marriage in a dangerous world. Insofar as Tepl resorted to the literary discourse, he argued convincingly for the supreme importance of the fictional text insofar as it provides him, and hence also us, with the necessary platform to explore the ultimate meaning of life, to cope with the ineffability of death, and to find an answer to the ultimate question why we actually live here on earth.

141 Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität* (see note 136), 331–37, et passim.

XVI The Widowed Christine de Pizan – Female Literary Perspectives

When we turn to our second case, Christine de Pizan, who flourished at about the same time as Tepl, and perhaps just slightly later than Geoffrey Chaucer, we encounter a remarkably similar situation, except that Christine pursued a much stronger gender-oriented approach, utilizing the fact that she had lost her beloved husband also as an opportunity to investigate her position as a woman in a patriarchal world. We know considerably more about Christine than about many other contemporary writers and poets, particularly because of numerous autobiographical references and texts in her œuvre. She was born around 1364/1365 in Venice, the same year her father was invited by King Charles V to serve as his personal medical physician. The entire family moved to Paris in ca. 1368. Christine married Étienne de Castel, the royal notary and secretary, with whom she had three children. In 1389 Christine's father, Thomas de Pizan, suddenly died, and her husband followed only one year later, throwing her into the abyss of a single woman and widow forced to take care of her entire family by herself. This catastrophic experience might have served her especially to find access to creative writing since she began to compose her own poetry already a few years later. The subsequent two decades witnessed an incredible outflow of remarkable and unique literary works from her pen, and she is rightly identified as the probably most important French author of her time.¹⁴²

Amazingly, Christine can also be credited with having composed probably the first verses in praise of a husband by a female poet. In “A Sweet Thing is Marriage” (XXVI) she identifies her husband as a worthy and noble man who did nothing wrong against her and only expressed his love for her, especially in their wedding night: “And surely the gentle man loves me well” (51). In “The Gentlest Man” (No. XXXV) she projects him as an ideal person, singing a song of full praise of him: “The best lover a woman ever had” (51). But her happiness did not last

142 There is much research literature on Christine; see, above all, Nadia Margolis, *An Introduction to Christine de Pizan* (Gainesville, Tallahassee, et al.: University Press of Florida, 2011). But consult also Marie-Joséphine Pinet, *Christine de Pisan: étude biographique et littéraire* (1927; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974); Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea Books, 1984). For an excellent text selection, see *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, selected and ed. by Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea Books, 1994). For recent research on Christine, see the contributions to *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady. *Medieval Casebook* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003). Neither the theme of death nor of mourning as critical aspects of Christine's writing is considered here, however.

for long, since Étienne died so early, which caused Christine to start composing deeply moving ballades on his death: “Like the mourning dove I’m now all alone, / and like a shepherdless sheep gone astray, / For death has long ago taken away / My loved one whom I constantly mourn” (52, no. Rondeau I). Very similar to Johannes of Tepl, Christine expresses her desperation and complete forlornness because without her husband she does not perceive any ray of hope in her life (53). Consequently, we discover the first widow poems in medieval literature, as far as I can tell, in Rondeau III, for instance, “I Am a Widow Lone.” She describes, not in a dialogue with death, her appearance in mourning clothes, suffering from distress and deep sadness. Yet, she also attacks death bitterly and accuses him of betrayal: “Since I lost my love, by foul Death betrayed, / Grief has struck me, which has to perdition led / All my good days, and so my joy has fled” (53).

Clearly trying to develop coping mechanisms for her pain, Christine writes the short rondeau “A Difficult Thing (LV) in which she explores the meaning of grief and how she might be able to endure the deep pain. Although she does not reach any concrete answer, the creation of the poem itself appears as the right method in transforming the pain into something constructive in her life. While Tepl’s poem was obviously intended for public consumption, as reflected by its dialogic structure and the great attention paid to rhetorical and stylistic elements, Christine seems to ruminate by herself about her grief which she has to hide from the public that appears hostile to her: “For I must mask the pain, / As nowhere is there pity; / Greater the cause to gain, / The less the amity” (55).¹⁴³

The most important treatment of suffering and pain, however, can be found in Christine’s long allegorical poem *The Book of the Mutation of Fortune* (1403, 23, 636 verses), which reflects the deep influence which Boëthius’s *De consolazione philosophiae* had exerted on her, which underlines, once again, the enduring power and significance of consolation literature throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁴⁴ As Miranda Griffin now remarks, Christine combines personal, autobiographical aspects with philosophical teachings from late antiquity, especially Boëthius’s *De consolazione philosophiae*, in order to gain basic “learning about the macrocosm (about the history and geography of the world, or the arrangement of the

143 Claire Le Brun-Gouanvic, “Christine de Pizan et la lyrique du deuil,” *@analyses* 2.3 (2007): 56–60 (online at: <https://uottawa.scholarsportal.info/ojs/index.php/revue-analyses/article/view/686/587> (last accessed on May 6, 2013).

144 I have traced the history of this philosophical discourse in my introductory article “Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg,” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein Philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien*, 4 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2012), 1–109.

heavens) enables Christine to find some consolation on a microcosmic, personal scale.”¹⁴⁵

Christine, like many of her predecessors and successors had to accept the deep impact of fortune on her life, that is, the inability to control her own existence because of the turn of the allegorical wheel. In order to illustrate the issue most poignantly, the poet basically retells her own life in order to illustrate the vagaries we are all exposed to at any moment without having a real chance to control the framework of our existence. ‘Mutation’ proves to be the key word here, the constant change we are subject to, which also brings about pain and suffering, oddly coupled with happiness and joy. While vanity blinds people’s perception of reality, the true philosopher succeeds in seeing through this false impression. The workings of fortune, however, are most effective in bringing most people under her sway: ‘

She deals in victory and loss
As men pursue the shallow gloss
Of honor, wealth, and property,
While killing life and liberty,
True happiness and so much more;
We’d rather languish at her door
As she blindly contradicts us
Warmly welcomes, then evicts us. (111)

To achieve the necessary philosophical stance that allows one to cope well in this life, one must learn wise servitude and self-mastery, which then blaze the path toward achieving “Virtue, friendship, all good things, / Outlasting jewels and golden rings” (112). Suffering, plight, and sorrow are quite normal in human life and should not be fought with; instead they are the stumbling blocks in every existence, and they could also be the confusing turns and bends in a maze, another spiritual emblem of life. The entire poem ultimately serves Christine to explain to her audience how she managed to cope with all that pain and how she utilized it for the development of her own strength, i.e., how to turn into a metaphorical man.

The most important aspect of this lengthy poem inviting us to carry out a comparison with Tepl’s *Plowman* consists of the fact that Christine’s husband

145 Miranda Griffin, “Transforming Fortune: Reading and Chance in Christine de Pizan’s ‘Mutation de Fortune’ and ‘Chemni de long estude’,” *The Modern Language Review* 104.1 (2009): 54–73; here 56. See also Nadia Margolis, “Christine de Pizan’s Life in Lament: Love, Death, and Politics,” *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature*, ed. Jane Tolmie and M. J. Toswell. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 265–81.

suddenly passed away, and this shortly after her father's death. Here the audience assumes the role which the Plowman had assigned Death as his rhetorical opposite, although the exchange between both was at first of a deeply hostile nature. Christine does not attack, but she laments, and then she tries to come to terms with her pain: "All aware, I'd have been afraid / But, fatigued was I from crying; / Near-paralyzed, there lying / I fell asleep toward suppertime" (125). The experience of existential loss finds expression in the metaphor of her ship of life having been smashed at the rocks and now being exposed to the waves and the storm, taking in water.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the very challenge of near-death then transformed Christine, and she awakened in a transformed stage, recognizing manly strength in her own body. She shrugged of the sorrow and pain and turned to work, intent on taking charge of her own life despite all the dangers:

So I raised my eyes all around,
At the mangled ship all dashed aground
Sail and mast I saw in tatters;
To angry storms, nothing matters.
...
When I'd seen this devastation,
I prepared for reparation.
Hammer in hand, with mortar and nails,
I rejoined the planks; then where snails
Dwell, under rocks, I gathered moss
To cover leaks, I spread it across,
And made the hull watertight, then
I drained the bilge: she floats again! (126)

Christine de Pizan manages to restore the ship as it was before and to start sailing again because with her own energy and strength she had recovered her life from the devastation brought about by her husband's death. She puts it in most specific terms: "For I learned to pilot, to prevail / Over oceans at my command, / I and my crew knew to withstand / Danger and fend off death. Now see, / Like a real man, I have to be" (126–27).

Even though the strikes of fortune had threatened to crush her, she succeeded in overcoming the pain and grief because she took actions herself and struggled

146 Bärbel Zühlke, *Christine de Pizan in Text und Bild: Zur Selbstdarstellung einer frühhumanistischen Intellektuellen*. Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung, 36 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1994), 63–69. While she clearly recognizes the topical nature of Christine's mourning and lamentation, she alerts us to the difference between the representative-poetic mode of speech and the empirical-pragmatic one (69).

hard, getting her metaphorical ship afloat again. This process, however, proved to be possible only, as we can assume, especially in light of Tepl's own accomplishments in that regard, because she resorted to the pen and started to reflect upon her own life, her parents, the virtues she had inherited from them. We could even go one step further and suggest, following the observations of previous scholars, that particularly the tragic strike of misfortune in her life, with the loss of her father and then, rapidly thereafter, of her own husband proved to be an important catalyst for her to turn to writing and to fend for herself as an individual person, free from male control.¹⁴⁷

Poetry, in a way, emerges as the ultimate catalyst for both Christine and Johannes, and both reflect on death as a force to be reckoned with, yet not as stunning force undermining the value of all life in the traditional, theological sense of the word. Neither poet can be fully counted among the new Renaissance thinkers, but both elaborated in powerful ways new methods of coping with death, pain, sorrow, mourning and grief. And both emerged, through their texts and in their texts, as triumphant victors who manage to defeat death in his own terms because they take charge of their own lives and acknowledge the beauty and value of the human existence.

Widowhood has often been treated as a tragic strike in the lives of people, and particularly late medieval poets and writers dealt with that topic quite intensively, as recent scholarship has unearthed.¹⁴⁸ Both Johannes von Tepl and

147 Zühlke, *Christine de Pizan* (see note 146), 69: "Trotz der zahlreichen heftigen Klagen über den Verlust des Ehemannes vermag die Autorin seinem Tod jedoch einen positiven Aspekt abzugewinnen: Wäre ihr der Mann erhalten geblieben, so hätte sie sich niemals mit solcher Intensität dem Studium der Wissenschaften widmen können" (Despite the numerous and intensive laments about the loss of her husband, the poet can gain a positive outlook from it: If she had not lost her husband, she would never have been able to dedicate herself to the study of sciences with such intensity).

148 See the contributions to *Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. Louise Mirrer. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992); *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, ed. Sue Sheridan Walker (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993); *Medieval London Widows: 1300–1500*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1994); *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner. Women and Men in History (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1999); *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl. The New Middle Ages (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Albrecht Classen, "Witwen in der Literatur des deutschen Mittelalters: Neue Perspektiven auf ein vernachlässigtes Thema," *Etudes Germaniques* 57.2 (2002): 197–232; id., "Widows: Their Social and Religious Functions According to Medieval German Literature, with Special Emphasis on Erhart Gross's *Witwenbuch* (1446),"

Christine also contributed to this genre in most impressive ways, but the unique accomplishment of both consisted not only of their exploration of the meaning of the loss of the marriage partner. The true and actually timeless value of both their texts consists of their ability to demonstrate how the literary discourse can contribute so effectively to the coming to terms with fundamental human concerns, suffering and mourning in this case.

As Louise M. Bishop now comments, “The intersection between learned and lay makes an understanding of the basic patterns of Latinate healing a useful start for understanding the role of medical texts in late medieval England.”¹⁴⁹ One of the best avenues to achieve that goal might be a close study of miracle narratives, highly popular throughout the Middle Ages and well beyond. Yet, with the rise of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, the bitter struggle against the mystery of the religious word or text” completed the separation of the word from its healing qualities by denigrating the last remnants of an alliance between healing and piety.”¹⁵⁰

There is no denying that modern medicine since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (or perhaps only since the nineteenth century) has witnessed incredible progress almost to the point at which people begin to worry about the new power which medical research has gained, almost to the point of being in the position of a creative God. However, alternative medicine, integrative medicine, palliative medicine, mental healing processes based on spiritual aspects, the identification of stress, for instance, as a major trigger for many medical problems, etc. are currently gaining in traction and promise to build bridges from the postmodern world to the Middle Ages.

Louise M. Bishop wonders aloud, but very appropriately, “Can recognition of material text’s identity with material body and the subtleties of a participatory consciousness, especially potent when words’ power heals, shift the understanding of materiality toward a new – albeit renewed – rhetoric of care as well as cure and of self and other? Can it meet globalizations’ pathological and murderous immateriality and challenge an authoritarian medical politics sustained by commercialism? Can new interdisciplinary conversations between biology and consciousness, between literature and evolution, and between healing and poetic

Fifteenth-Century Studies 28 (2003): 65–79; Britta-Juliane Kruse, *Witwen: Kulturgeschichte eines Standes in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

149 Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 15.

150 Bishop, *Words, Stones, Herbs* (see note 149), 216.

word reinvigorate medical ethics and remake the subject of healing?”¹⁵¹ We might well be on the track toward that goal in light of efforts both in the Humanities and in the school of Medicine, and the current volume is an attempt to contribute toward that enterprise of an integrative approach to human existence. Much can be learned from medieval authors, though all their statements have to be viewed in the appropriate context and then have to be translated accordingly for us to make them understandable, if not even applicable, to modern conditions concerning the healthy body.

We might no longer want to go so far as to accept the ancient idea that dog licking might have a healing effect, especially in the case of festering wounds, which was a concept based on some biblical comments and didactic teachings throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁵² Claudius Aelius (ca. 175– ca. 235) confirmed this as much in his *De Natura Animalium* (VIII, 9) as did Petrus Chrysologus (ca. 380–450) in his *Sermo* 121.7. Even Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), in her *Physica* (VII.2), referred to the phenomenon that dog licking could be recommended from a medical point of view. This was then repeated by many didactic and medical writers throughout the Middle Ages, such as Hugo von Trimberg (ca. 1230/1235–1313) in his *Der Renner* and Konrad von Megenberg (1309–1374) in his *Buch der Natur*, which in turn was based on Thomas of Cantimpré’s (d. 1263) *De naturis rerum*.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, this strange idea confirms, once again, that there might indeed be alternative ways of healing than modern medicine wants to proscribe to us.

XVII Theophrastus von Hohenheim, known as Paracelsus

One of the most intriguing, but also most contested medical researchers in the early modern world can certainly be identified as Theophrastus von Hohenheim, commonly known as Paracelsus, who was born in Einsiedeln in 1493 and died in Salzburg in 1541. He was definitely not the traditional physician or philosopher, and he also did not pursue dogmatic theology in his religious ruminations. Much admired and much maligned, Paracelsus developed many new perspectives on

¹⁵¹ Bishop, *Words, Stones, Herbs* (see note 149), 219–20.

¹⁵² See the article in *Wikipedia* at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wound_licking (last accessed on Nov. 8, 2013).

¹⁵³ Meinolf Schumacher, *Ärzte mit der Zunge: Leckende Hunde in der europäischen Literatur. Von der patristischen Exegese des Lazarus-Gleichnisses (Lk. 16) bis zum Romanzero Heinrich Heines* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2003), 7–9, 27–39.

human health and spirituality and so deserves at least some mention at this point, although he will be discussed at much greater length in Thomas Willard's and Andrew Week's contributions to this volume. Intriguingly, there would be so much to say about Theophrastus, since he left behind a huge œuvre of very diverse nature and since he made so many different contributions to a variety of intellectual fields.

My only concern here pertains to how he viewed medicine and the best possible practice, to what extent he offered new perspectives and integrated spiritual aspects into the physical, medical, and chemical treatment of human diseases and sicknesses. As we can recognize countless times in his works, he insisted on the supreme importance of personal experience and the critical distance to the learned tradition because the human body needed to be treated in a practical manner, not simply in light of ancient and medieval medical knowledge, mostly determined by theoretical ruminations. As Paracelsus's medical work visibly documented, he was, in fact, considerably more successful in helping his patients than many of his contemporary colleagues, although his often rather unorthodox methods and also rhetoric angered many and made him the enemy of his entire discipline. Since he particularly leaned toward occult sciences, felt attracted to the Kabbala, operated with alchemy, and yet interwove his medical research with strong theological perspectives, Paracelsus always remained an outsider, almost a mythical figure of gigantic proportions, especially for his posterity and until today. In this regard, however, the opinions of subsequent scientists such as Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and Isaac Newton (1643–1727) did not differ that much, all of them firmly convinced of the coming apocalypse and the need to understand nature both through the channels of mechanical sciences and theology.¹⁵⁴

Paracelsus deserves our particular attention in our context because he not only undertook the first steps toward the early modern sciences and medicine,

154 See, for instance, Werner Heinz, "Die gelehrte Medizin zwischen Mittelalter und Humanismus: Wo steht Paracelsus?," *Paracelsus im Kontext der Wissenschaften seiner Zeit: Kultur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Annäherungen*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 151–73; see also the other contributions to this volume. Cf. also Mariacarla Gadebusch Bondio, "Die Fehler und Irrtümer der Ärzte – Paracelsus' Kritik und ihr medizinethisches Potenzial," *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), 215–30. Very insightful proves to be Lioba Wagner, *Alchemie und Naturwissenschaft: Über die Entstehung neuer Ideen an der Reibungsfläche zweiter Weltbilder; gezeigt an Paracelsus, Robert Boyle und Issac Newton* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011); see Thomas Willard's review in *Renaissance Quarterly* 66.3 (2013): 1007–09. All three scientists/alchemists were working toward new explanatory patterns, or "Erklärungsmuster" (Wagner, 259–60).

but, much more significantly, operated with various disciplines at the same time (alchemy, theology, medicine, astrology) and approached medical health from an integrative, if not holistic point of view, making him, in a truly fascinating fashion, a major forerunner of modern alternative medicine.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps one of the most accessible and comprehensive treatises on health and medicine from Paracelsus's pen might be his *Liber de longa* consisting of two little studied but fairly comprehensive treatises concerning the prolongation of life. In Thomas Willard's words, "they were completed before he left his position as Basel's city physician and before he began to publish medical texts under the name Paracelsus. After they were posthumously printed, between 1560 and 1570, they were recognized as integral texts in the Paracelsian canon – texts that both deserved and needed commentary. They were translated into English and other languages, but neither has received much scholarly attention in the last century.

The lack of interest is surprising, inasmuch as the tracts call for a unified approach to physical and spiritual health and for a medical practice that would now be termed integrative or holistic."¹⁵⁶ Paracelsus emphasizes at first that there is no natural end point of our life, since everything is contingent in that regard and since we as individuals would have the power to determine the death date ourselves. Then he also alerts us to the fact that all medicine which people have created originally came from God, which means for him as well that

¹⁵⁵ See, for instance, Heinrich Schipperges, *Paracelsus: der Mensch im Licht der Natur* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1974); Pirmin Meier, *Paracelsus: Arzt und Prophet: Annäherungen an Theophrastus von Hohenheim*. 5th rev. and expanded ed. (1993; Zürich: Ammann Verlag, 2004); Frank Geerk, *Paracelsus: Arzt unserer Zeit: Leben, Werk und Wirkungsgeschichte des Teophrastus von Hohenheim* (Zürich: Benziger, 1992); Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation*. SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997); Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*. 2nd, rev. ed. (1958; New York: Karger, 1982); Sergius Golowin, *Paracelsus: Mediziner – Heiler – Philosoph* (Darmstadt: Schirner, 2007); Charles Webster, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008); for a recent popular study, see Paul Letter, *Paracelsus: Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Frieling, 2009). There is no end in sight of relevant research on Paracelsus, and this on an international level. The enormous fascination that he continues to exert especially today does not seem to know any bounds. Cf. now, for the history of alchemy, Lawrence Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*. Synthesis (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012). We have to be very inecareful, of course, not to fall prey to deceptive sales strategies by those who falsely advocate alternative medicine, which often proves to be more of a gimmick than a serious method for healing. See Offit, *Do You Believe in Magic* (see note 42).

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Willard, "Living the Long Life: Physical and Spiritual Health in Two Early Paracelsian Tracts," *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), 347–80; here 348.

death itself does not produce a sickness, and that no sickness by itself leads to death.¹⁵⁷

But the common medical doctor would not have the faintest idea about such secret insights, and hence he is writing, as he emphasizes, for the insider, the learned, and the wise person who would understand his message (470).

From a pragmatic perspective, Paracelsus clearly emphasizes the need to differentiate in medical treatments the specific age of the person, youth, middle age, and old age. In other words, long life, which he identifies, naturally, as the goal of a good life, would have to be divided into three distinct stages. But in each stage the individual would have to take great care not to live excessively, not to eat and drink too much, and hence not to abuse the body – for the first stage this pertains specifically to the parents who would have to make sure that their children receive the appropriate amount of food and drink, and not too much. Wealth or power, as held by kings and emperors, would not be a guarantee to secure a good and long life, since history teaches, as Paracelsus outlines, that the opposite had usually been the case, with all the means available seducing the rulers to lead an unhealthy life style.

Typical of the author, however, he also does not hold back a biting swipe at the court physicians whom he labels generally as incompetent and untrustworthy (472). While he warns against the danger resulting from an undisciplined life (“unordentlich[] Leben,” 473), he also admits that nature produces, by itself, epidemics that can hardly be avoided. Moreover, there are illnesses that result from mental disturbances, narcissism, and false imagination, not to mention incantations, i.e., magic. Each one of them requires its own healing treatment, since only specific causes can be addressed by equivalent remedies and operations (474).

But healing alone by itself would not be enough, since subsequently the body would require strengthening and a natural build-up which the physician would have to oversee as well through a well-organized regimen (474–75). Most importantly, Paracelsus insists on a holistic and a fundamental treatment that should not be limited to individual complexities, or compositions of the four humors. Instead, as he poignantly outlines, it is critical to preserve the root of a tree rather than the branches because the strength of a tree originates from there (475). And specifically to this point, Paracelsus explicitly rejected the Galenic theory of the four humors and replaced them with his teachings on the effects of basic elements, mercury, salt, and sulfur.

157 I resort, for pragmatic reasons, to the modernized German edition, *Theophrastus Paracelsus Werke*, 5 vols., trans., or rather modernized by Will-Erich Peuckert (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co., 1965–1968), vol. 1: *Medizinische Schriften* (1965), 469–94; here 469.

Beyond his medical perspective, Paracelsus also offers a central argument regarding how to define human life in the first place, which consists essentially of its spiritual dimension. For an explanation, he refers to a burning wood which does not contain fire in itself, but a special entity that allows the transformation of the wood into fiery energy (476–77). It would not be Christian to believe that we should not use medicine to prolong our life since that medicine was made available by God for us. We as human beings are assumed to live to the full potential, although the lack of reason normally blinds us to understand the true conditions of how to achieve that goal (477). Moreover, some locations here on earth are more benefitting for life, others less (477–78), but everything that exists, both good and poisonous plants, are part of creation (478). Paracelsus consequently also discusses the influence of the stars, the role of good versus bad air and water, etc., and thus projects a universal picture of the right conditions for each individual to achieve the goal of a long life.

Critically, to comprehend this author in a more complex manner we always need to keep in mind the central importance of our virtues, i.e., the basic spiritual life force in us which does not die with our death. Virtues are, as he says, an *esse*, which transforms into an *essentia* (480); that in turn ultimately enters the body, that is, the four humors, constituting the foundation of all life (481), which he calls *essentia rerum vel humores rerum, vel liquores rerum* (481). By the same token, there are always two dimensions in all existence, the material and the spiritual, or, *mens* and *ens* (483). Both, however, have to collaborate closely to achieve truly the long life which all people aspire for.

Leaving all theoretical speculations behind, Paracelsus then simply posits that people ought to obey the regimens of a properly conducted life, such as the observation of moderation and age-appropriate eating and drinking habits. Subsequently the physical environment also has to be considered because some areas are helpful, others are destructive for human health. He does not exclude medicine, but matches it with the other aspects. Medicine all by itself does not mean much; instead it needs to be prepared in line with fundamental principles of life, as it can be found both in people and animals, since it must contain the *essentia* (485).

Here as well as at many other passages the author refuses, however, to be more specific and refers, concerning his true audience, to those readers with profound insights and understanding, while the common people would probably not grasp what he was really talking about. Moderation in all eating and drinking would be a fundamental aspect, which every medical doctor could prescribe, not necessitating him to explain it further (486). Similarly, with respect to living conditions, pertaining to weather, temperatures, the soil, and air, Paracelsus highlights, once again, *Aequalitas* (486), since each individual requires a different

framework to live a long and good life. Some people are strong in their nature from birth, others prove to be weak and sickly (488).

Whatever the general conditions might be, which change from location to location, from time to time, and from individual to individual, all people depend entirely on the *spiritus vitae* and the *humores vitae* (488), which are Paracelsian terms – though not only his own, considering the long history of Galenic medicine in the Middle Ages – for the two components of all life, the body and the spirit/mind. Most important, however, proves to be the first force, since everything else emanates from it successively (488–89). To treat the human body appropriately, would require to apply *simplicia* and *arcana* (489), or material and spiritual measures and medicines, and both combined would easily facilitate someone to grow old to the age of hundred-forty and more.

Mental illnesses commonly result from the spirit, or the *astren*, or the superior beings in the cosmos (490), but Paracelsus admits himself that he does not know about the origin of the spiritual aspects, although he argues that they truly exist, since nothing could be achieved as to good life and health without the consideration of the spiritual dimension since that is noticeable in every aspect of the human existence. People, however, have the ability to withstand that astral world and could voluntarily resist that influence, which would be tantamount to grass that on its own volition would reject the infusion of energy coming from the sun. Yet, as Paracelsus unmistakably observes, grass cannot grow without the sun, and hence human beings cannot live without spirituality, that is, the energy coming from there, entering the human body. As he comments, “So ist gleicherweise eine, die uns erhält, wie das Nutriment den Leib, das ist die obere Constellation” (491; there is fortunately one source of influence that preserves us, as the nutrition preserves the body, and that is the upper constellation). He also comments on the so-called lower constellation, that is, the planets, which can have a negative influence, at least from an astrological perspective, which I prefer to ignore at this point.

Similarly, his reflections on incantations and conjurations can be set aside, blurring the overarching picture that emerges in this tract for the investigation that we pursue with respect to long, or good, life. One point, however, deserves further consideration so relevant for the medical doctor in Paracelsus. He underscores the great relevance of piety as a protection against all evil intentions by magicians or other individuals filled with hostility against him (493). The religious dimension, hence, cannot be ignored, as Paracelsus consistently argued for a medical concept in which Christ was identified as the ultimate, the greatest medical healer.¹⁵⁸ By

158 In this regard Paracelsus reveals how much he was still steeped in ancient and medieval

contrast, he shows himself vehemently opposed to all kinds of superstition and insists that people need to dismiss silly imagination in divinatory symbolism that might actually bring about physical distress and illness if the mind is weak and subject to such false images (494).

In his *Archidoxen* from ca. 1525 Paracelsus analyzes in even more details what he meant with his concept about the various elements making up human life, which is, at first sight, primarily based on Galen's idea of the four humors. But as in his later *Liber de longa vita* we come across the intriguing pair of *corpore materiae* and *corpore spirituali* (341), although here he associates the latter primarily with the senses, such as hearing, eye-sight, sensitivity at large, feeling, and taste. However, Paracelsus specifies, which is highly characteristic of his entire approach to the medical field, he always recognizes in that pair the workings of God Himself, the *magnalia dei* (341). The human being is driven by the inner imagination, which in turn proves to be the divine inspiration, so it would behoove the medical doctor to understand this uniquely mixed composition of the human body in order to offer effective help in case of illness.

But Paracelsus did not limit himself just to esoteric thoughts about physical wellness and mental health. In very concrete terms he conceived of the direct impact which sadness, melancholy, and other emotions have on hunger and thirst (343), although then he jumps to more elusive ideas implying that nutrition might not always have to be concrete food, but could also be the spiritual interaction with the earth. More insightful might have been his observation that all food ingested adapts to the individual's need and transforms accordingly. By the same token, any medicine taken by a sick person would work differently according to the recipient:

Gleiches ist auch von den Arzneien zu verstehen, daß die selbigen in den Gliedern nach der Eigenschaft, wie die Glieder sind, transmutiert werden, nehmen aber die Stärke und Kräfte und Tugenden von ihrer eigenen Substanz, je nachdem die Dispersion, das ist Austeilung, gut oder böse ist, subtil oder nicht, je nachdem die Arznei ist. Ist sie von quinta essentia, so wird ihre Transmutation desto stärker. Ist sie aber vom groben, so bleibt sie so. (344)

[The same applies to medicine, that is, it is transmuted in the various body parts according to the properties of those parts. But it takes the power and strength and virtues from its own substance, according to the dispersion, that is, the dissemination of its matter, in a good or in a bad fashion, just according to the properties of the medicine. If it consists of the *quinta essentia*, the transmutation will be most strong; is it of coarse material, it will have only a coarse effect.]

traditions that recognize Christ as the *medicus*; see Vollmer, "Sünde – Krankheit – 'väterliche Züchtigung'" (see note 60).

After having discussed the workings and properties of the four humors and the strategies on how to separate them, Paracelsus turns to the *quinta essentia* and describes it as a matter resulting from all physical elements and resting in everything that is alive. Only in this *quinta essentia* can be found true nature, strength, virtue, and hence medicine (361). Without this fifth element, there would not be any life since it is the *spiritus vitae* (362). With the help of the *quinta essentia* all sicknesses can be healed because it rests in all matter and constitutes the core of all elements (363). Its power results not from the four elements, but from the properties in all of them combined, which means that there are many different manifestations of that ultimate force (364). Anyone having this *quinta essentia* will not die until the predestined date of death will have arrived. To heal a specific sickness would then require to find the very characteristic *quinta essentia* that can address the physical ailment. Basically, as Paracelsus indicates, he is really talking about the fundamental life force without which none of the four elements could even exist.

One surprising aspect proves to be that, as he emphasizes, the *quinta essentia* is responsible for the colors, similar to the virtues (365). If gold, for instance, loses its color, this would indicate that it has lost its inner essence. In other words, Paracelsus does not simply insinuate that the Holy Spirit, Christ, or God would be the ultimate source of life, though he seems to accept that anyway from a theological point of view. Instead, he argues, speaking clearly as a chemist and practicing physical doctor, that there is a unique ultimate source of life that would have always to be considered in all treatments because otherwise no medicine and no healing method could be effective at all. In this regard he emphasizes intriguingly that each sickness needs to be combatted by means of finding the very specific nature of the *quinta essentia* inherent in each physical condition. Human life operates, in other words, according to his teaching, both on a physical and a spiritual level. Although he differentiates carefully among the various types of fifth essences, altogether he perceives in the *quinta essentia* the basic life force which demonstrates its workings in multifarious manners. It is, after all, life all by itself. The true medical doctor would have to understand what element carries what force which can hurt one entity and help the other, which ultimately leads to a universal harmony.

As much as Paracelsus claims to be an authority in these medical, chemical, and spiritual matters, he still admits openly that the true scholar can only feel awe in face of the infinite *arcana* and *mysteria* of nature (371). As to the former, he comments:

Es hat die Kraft uns zu verändern, zu mutieren oder wandeln, zu renovieren, zu restaurieren, gleich den Arcanen dei nach deren Judicierung. Und wiewohl es so ist, daß in diesen

Arcanen nit die Ewigkeit oder eine symphonia auf himmlisch ist, so sind sie gegen uns gehalten doch als himmlisch zu rechnen, dieweil sie unseren Leib erhalten, und mehr, als der Vernunft zu gründen möglich ist, wunderbarlich in uns wirken. (382–83)

[It has the power to change, to mutate or vary, to renovate, to restore, like the *arcana dei* after their judgment. And although it is so that in these *arcana* there is not contained the eternity or a heavenly symphony, but they are directed toward us in such a way that we can call them heavenly because they preserve our body and work, more than our reason is capable of grasping it, in us.]

The author thus formulates his deep respect for the spiritual dimension of all life, as much as he tried himself to detect all the specific functions and aspects determining the physical components in life. He differentiates among the four *arcana*, but they all prove to be responsible for the maintenance of our existence until the preset date of our death (384). Comparing the *arcana* to Christ, he insists that we just have to believe in their existence and effectiveness upon which all our lives depend.

However, behind the *arcana* still rest another dimension, which Paracelsus identifies as the *prima materia*, the seed of all things. Death occurs only when its energy is spent and when it can no longer sustain the forces of life (387). The further details with which he concludes his lengthy treatise do not concern us here, since there is no practical way to verify or falsify his claims as to the workings of the specific elements and *arcana*, etc. In essence, however, Paracelsus emerges truly as an innovator who dismisses much of traditional medical research and authorities, and pursues his own concept of healing by way of a much more spiritually founded method of medicine (446–47).

In his *Bertheonea* Paracelsus vehemently rejected all the traditional medical authorities, including those from antiquity (Galen), the Arabic and the Jewish world, and also his contemporaries, and insisted that his own approach, based on experiments, should deserve the highest respect: “der ist ein Arzt, dem die Natur ihre Experiencz gibt, – nit der, der aus seinem spintisierendem Kopf wider die Natur, wider ihre Art und wider das, das in ihr ist, schreibt, redet und handelt” (15; he is a medical doctor who receives his experience from nature, not he who writes, talks, and acts on the basis of his fantasies in his head against nature, its properties, and its essence). True medicine, hence, works within and with nature since human life is part of it and can only sustain its health if it is predicated on the basic forces of nature. Moreover, he rejects the theologians and at the same time refers to Christ as his greatest authority in the prologue to his *Buch der Gebärung* (Book of Creation) (31).

While here and in other texts Paracelsus carefully examined the medical, theological, and philosophical conditions necessary for the achievement of a good life, in his *De Vita Beata* he stressed further that the intimate relationship

between the human existence here on earth and the one in the afterlife: “Denn es ist niemand, der nach seinem Tode selig sein kann, er sei denn schon auf Erden geseligt und dazu erwählt und gezogen worden” (IV, 131; There is no one who can be blessed after his death unless he is already blessed here on earth and who has not yet already been elected and drawn to it).

Although the author does not refer specifically to medicine here, he still clearly circumscribed the necessity to be foresightful, to lead a spiritual life in the material existence, and highlighted the absolute necessity to connect the physical being with the religious dimension. Life does not depend on how the metaphorical field is plowed and sowed, but on what kind of seeds are planted (IV, 131). Good people are those who know how to differentiate between good and evil, specifically turn their back to the evil and choose the good (IV, 132–33). Even though here Paracelsus does not address wellness or sickness, the theoretical approach outlined in this and other treatises emerges very clearly – that the material dimension does not determine the overall well-being of the body. As Thomas Willard now observes, “he views life in a system that reaches beyond the health of the body to the health of the soul and spirit and so connects his concerns with medicine and religion. His message to the world is that one needs both religion and medicine.”¹⁵⁹

In his *De causis morborum invisibilium*, moreover, Paracelsus remarks in all desired clarity that the world is built not only on the material, but also on the spiritual dimension, even though we as people are badly limited in our perceptive skills, normally limited through our blindness, recognizing only the material aspects. Both the visible and the invisible parts play equal roles and create, so to speak, two people in one (vol. II, 189). His intention then was, as he emphasizes himself explicitly, “Auf das Auftun der Augen ist weiterhin mein Vornehmen gerichtet, weil im Lichte der Natur so hell klar gezeigt wird, wie zu lernen sei unsichtbare Dinge sichtbar zu sehen” (189; My intension further is directed at opening the eyes because in the light of nature it is clearly shown how to learn about invisible things in a visible fashion).

God’s hand is noticeable in all aspects of material existence, and yet most people would not be clear-sighted enough to perceive it properly. Paracelsus, however, identifies himself as the true researcher in charge of penetrating deeper beyond the limit of the material existence: “Auf das Auftun der Augen ist weiterhin mein Vornehmen gerichtet, weil im Lichte der Natur so hell klar gezeigt wird, wie zu lernen sei unsichtbare Dinge sichtbar zu sehen” (189; My purpose continu-

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Willard, “Living the Long Life: Physical and Spiritual health in Two Early Paracelsian Tracts,” *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), 373.

ously aims at opening the eyes because in the light of nature it is shown so clearly how we can learn to see invisible things in a visible manner).

An impressive metaphor for the phenomenon of the invisibility of the divine world which is yet at work all the time and which the medical doctor needs to understand as well proves to be the bell which rings at night. The individual hears the sound, knows that the bell is actually ringing, but cannot see it (190). Furthermore, looking at all objects or bodies, we can always recognize in them, or behind them, the master who created them: “Glauben wir die Werke, so glauben wir auch den Meister des Werks, denn aus den Werken nit zu dem Meister weiterzuwandern, das ist ein toter Glaube und eine kindische Art” (190; If we believe in the existence of the works, we must also believe in the master of the works, because not to take the logical step from the works to the master would be a dead faith and an infantile approach).

Sickness hence emerges not simply as a phenomenon by itself, but as a sign or symbol of something else behind the physical body, that is, the spiritual body (191). The true medical doctor hence is called upon to gain understanding of the latter, which then will lead to the true healing process. Wherever anything happens in the physical world, as Paracelsus posits, we can be sure that their function is to make us search deeper for the spiritual causes. “Alle Werke geschehen durch Gott; wie sie uns aber anrühren, das zu erforschen ist uns befohlen” (191–92; All works happen through God, but we are charged with researching how they affect us). After all, as the author underscores, it is the task of all humans to find the way back to God, which happens already here in life through the careful analysis of the objective reality and the spiritual origin and essence behind it. Medical problems do not only hurt the body, but, in their spiritual origin, can also hurt the abode of God (193). While all works, or objects, are visible, the critical challenge consists of making the divine origin and cause of everything visible as well. In this regard, Paracelsus identifies the true medical doctor as a religious leader, without ignoring the need to apply concrete healing measures for the sick physical body.

Since everything has a spiritual dimension, half of all existence is actually not visible, but all things can become visible because potentially they are clearly identifiable and graspable (194). All our strength, hence our physical source of energy, rests in our faith, although the bodily senses cannot comprehend this mystery (198). Specifically, Paracelsus outlines, “alle Stärke, die wir haben und brauchen sollen, die soll im Glauben stehen. Und so versteht, daß des Glaubens rechte Kraft, wie jetzt angezeigt worden, erkannt werden soll” (198; all the strength that we possess and are supposed to employ must rest in the faith. Understand, then, the true force of faith must be recognized, as I have told you).

However, the instruments of faith can be used both to regain and maintain health and to hurt an individual by making him/her sick: “Unser Glaube ist nit

anders denn wie eines Werkmannes Instrument” (200; Our faith is nothing else but the instruments of a craftsman). All forms of sickness can result from a false faith, and individuals can thus cause many damage to others even, if not especially, in a physical manner (201). The right and good faith, however, would prove to be sufficient to achieve good health: “wenn wir im rechten Glauben wandeln, so können wir uns selbst gesund glauben” (202; if we walk in the right faith we can make ourselves well through believing). But Paracelsus admits himself that he is addressing a highly esoteric matter which most people would not be able to comprehend easily, and hence he refers to medicine that, if properly applied, would serve as a medium of God’s force restoring our health in the case of sickness (202).

Paracelsus’s treatise continues for many additional chapters, and we would have to follow his thought patterns for a long time without easily reaching a full understanding of his theory regarding physical and spiritual health within the framework of faith. It has become, however, abundantly clear how much Paracelsus argued for a highly complex form of treatment of sickness which incorporates as much the physical body as the spiritual body. Many of his ideas we would have to reject today as absurd or purely speculative, especially with regard to the power of imagination having a deep influence on the future shape and well-being of a newborn (231–40). What matters, nevertheless, certainly deserves to be considered with great care and sensitivity since he argued with great conviction for a holistic approach to human health based on the integration and harmonization of the physical with the spiritual.

It would be useless, as Paracelsus opines, to rely on the physical forces alone in order to achieve health; the spiritual forces likewise must be consulted. More specifically, the spiritual body can serve particularly for the defense of the physical body (282). Paracelsus was certainly not the only one embracing this new concept, which blended medicine, theology, astrology, early forms of chemistry, and astronomy, especially if we think of his high medieval forerunner Pietro d’Abano (ca. 1257–1316), whose fame continues to rest in the fact that he was at the forefront of these new developments that fascinate us today as much as they did his contemporaries.¹⁶⁰

160 *Médecine, astrologie et magie entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance: autour de Pietro d’Abano*, ed. Jean-Patrice Boudet, Franck Collard, and Nicolas Weill-Parot. Micrologus’ Library, 50 (Florence: Sismel, 2013). For d’ Abano, see also Enrico Berti, “Astronomia e astrologia da Pietro d’Abano a Giovanni Dondi dell’Orologio,” *Padova carrarese: atti del convegno, Padova, Reggia dei Carraresi, 11–12 dicembre 2003*, ed. Oddone Longo (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2005), 175–84; Fabio Seller, *Scientia astrorum: la fondazione epistemologica dell’astrologia in Pietro d’Abano*. Incipit, 4 (Naples: Gi-

Nevertheless, we have to be careful to avoid positing a too strong difference between Paracelsus and medieval medicine, especially in light of the huge corpus of *regimina sanitatis* where many of the insights were already formulated regarding the proper treatment of the human body before the onslaught of possible sickness. The true medical doctor looks out for the health of his/her patient, while the other type of a physician only treats the illness as it occurs. Prophylaxis consists of considering the body holistically, i.e., both physically and spiritually, and we moderns might be able to learn much from the medieval and early modern discourse on health, perhaps just because our predecessors in those fields did not have the same biological and medical knowledge as we do today and had to rely very much on what we call today ‘alternative’ medicine, and hence ‘integrative’ medicine.¹⁶¹

XVIII The Quest for Spirituality and Health

In light of both medieval and early modern investigations of the conditions that lead to human health, we can conclude that, perhaps out of a lack of better knowledge, the individual authorities heavily relied on the close interaction between the spiritual and the physical dimension. Whether they achieved better results with their methods (Hildegard of Bingen, Paracelsus) than modern medical doctors cannot be decided easily, if at all. We can conclude, however, that the discourse on the right interpretation and analysis of the human body in its spiritual and physical conditions has been much more complex than modern people might imagine, although current medical research seems to indicate an intriguing return to some of the pre-modern approaches and concepts, without falling into the trap of voodoo methods, speculation, or fantasy.

Medical sciences in the Middle Ages were a far cry from that in the modern world, with its heavy emphasis on the four humors (Galen), herbal medicine, the emphasis on bleeding as a standard practice, and so forth, but people survived

annini, 2005). See also the contributions to *Être médecin à la cour (Italie, France, Espagne, XIIIe – XVIIIe siècle)*, ed. Elisa Andretta et Marilyn. Micrologus’ Library, 52 (Florence: Sismel, 2013).

161 This remark is not intended to idealize blindly medieval medicine. After all, there were many other approaches to physical health and sickness practiced in the Middle Ages that we would view today rather with scepticism and outright contempt. Prognostications and the wide range of mantic disciplines, for instance, were highly popular in the pre-modern world. See the contributions to *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie prognostischer Wissenschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. Alexander Fidora, together with Katrin Bauer. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 74 (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar, 2013).

even then, they received good medical care, as far as it was possible then, and received the necessary drugs and treatments helping them to overcome diseases and sicknesses, here disregarding epidemics such as the Black Death.¹⁶² Historians of medicine can draw from a vast storehouse of relevant tracts and treatises written during the pre-modern period, often focusing on effects of water and hence balneology, specifically thermal baths and the like,¹⁶³ but our topic does not deal with medicine in the traditional sense of the word; instead we want to explore how body-mind correlations have been viewed in the past and what those approaches might do for our understanding of human health.

The search for the spirituality factor, as I would like to call this phenomenon, continues, both in literature and religion, in the medical sciences and in psychiatry and psychology. Only the holistic approach hence seems to be the right track, allowing us to gain a solid comprehension what human life is really all made of. Happiness and health are two of the most important aspects in all our existence, but how to achieve those remains, of course, rather elusive for everyone, especially if one does not integrate the abstract, spiritual aspects. The material body, as Paracelsus, among many others, had emphasized so clearly, represents only the one side of the coin. All literature, the arts, religion, and other human manifestations reflect unmistakably the other side, which the history of our culture

162 *The Alphabet of Galen: Pharmacy from Antiquity to the Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Latin Text with English Translation and Commentary* by Nicholas Everett (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

163 For a good survey of the German medical literature, see Bernhard Dietrich Haage and Wolfgang Wegner, together with Gundolf Keil and Helga Haage-Naber, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Arts in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Grundlagen der Germanistik, 43 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2007), 177–246 (Haage). There is a huge amount of scholarly literature on this topic; see, for instance, Irvine Loudon, *Western Medicine: An Illustrated History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1997); see also the contributions to *Bodies of Knowledge: Cultural Interpretations of Illness and Medicine in Medieval Europe*, ed. Sally Crawford and Christina Lee. BAR International Series, 2170. (Oxford: Archaeopress: Available from Hadrian Books, 2010); Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); also consult the still valuable book by David Riesman, *The Story of Medicine in the Middle Ages* (New York: P. B. Hoeber, 1935). Many late medieval and Renaissance scholars, theologians, philosophers, and others also dealt with medical issues, such as Michele Savonarola (1385–1466), grandfather to the Dominican reformer Girolamo Savonarola, whose *De balneis* dealt with balneotherapy and the thermal baths of Italy. See the contributions to *Michele Savonarola: Medicina e cultura di corte*, ed. Chiara Crisciani and Gabriella Zuccolin. Micologus' Library, 37 (Florence: Sismel, 2011). For a review, see Kurt M. Boughan in *The Medieval Review* 13.10.03 (online); Carrie Griffin, "Historiography of Medieval Medicine," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 651–66, offers a succinct and detailed survey of the relevant research literature.

has constantly confirmed, irrespective of sometimes strong counter forces in support of complete materialism.¹⁶⁴

The term “cognitive fluidity” might actually prove to be quite handy in this context, since it is defined as follows:

The term cognitive fluidity refers to the capacity of the modern human mind to combine different ways of thinking with stores of knowledge to arrive at original thoughts, which are often highly creative and rely on metaphor and analogy. As such, cognitive fluidity is a key element of the human imagination. The term has been principally used to contrast the mind of modern humans, especially those after 50,000 B.P. (before present), with those of archaic humans such as Neanderthals and Homo erectus. The latter appear to have had a mentality that was domain-specific in nature – a series of largely isolated cognitive domains for thinking about the social, material, and natural worlds. With the advent of modern humans the barriers between these domains appear to have been largely removed and hence cognition became more fluid.¹⁶⁵

The reasons for publishing a whole encyclopedia on the interaction between the sciences and religion are manifold, but we seem to achieve a certain degree of consensus among representatives of both fields, as the editor explains himself:

Today sciences as varied as the neurosciences, ecology, and biotechnology raise questions about human beings and the future of our planetary home, perhaps especially for those who possess a sense of the divine. Similarly, chaos theory, quantum mechanics, and the ever-deepening understanding of the role of chance in biological systems conspire to challenge the notions of ultimate reality and divine action espoused by religious traditions and sacred texts.

At the same time, partly because of the unwanted side effects of science-driven technologies, there is a growing conviction that science in itself may never yield an ultimately satisfying explanation of human life and the world we inhabit. And yet the information about reality produced by the sciences is invaluable. Perhaps we have two domains of meaning

164 See now the contributions to *Zeichen und Wunder: interdisziplinäre Zugänge* (see note 16). Cf. also the study by Wilhelm Theopold, *Mirakel: Heilung zwischen Wissenschaft und Glauben* (Munich: K. Thiemeig, 1983); see also Johan van Uffelen, *Helers en heiligen: volksgenezers en wonderdoeners in Brabant* (Hilversum: Gooi & Sticht, 1989); for a specific historical event, see Vittorio Messori, *Il miracolo: Spagna 1640: indagine sul più sconvolgente prodigio mariano* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1998); Folker Albrecht, *Blindheit und Lähmung: Heilungserzählungen als Schlüsseltexte für Erfahrungen von Kindern und Jugendlichen*. Bibel – Schule – Leben, 1 (Münster, Hamburg, and London: Lit, 1999); Andreas Beck, *Wunderheilungen in der Medizin?: ein Versuch der Klärung* (Constance: Clio-Verlag, 2004). See also Jacalyn Duffin, *Medical Miracles: Doctors, Saints, and Healing in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

165 *Cognitive Fluidity: Encyclopedia of Science and Religion*, ed. J. Wentzel Vrede van Huyssteen. Vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003), 148.

here, with science and religion each ruler of its own domain. Or perhaps the structures and patterns of nature disclosed by the sciences connect with the more elusive yet existentially more immediate meaning typical of religious faith. Even as the religions of the world grow more accepting of the sciences, at least some intellectuals are noting how scientific methods and aims can enhance and perhaps support religious faith. Therefore, contrary to popular misconceptions, the relationship between the sciences and the various religions at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not about conflict or confrontation only. Those who participate actively in this dialogue are often deeply committed, not only to a specific science, but also to specific religious beliefs. Even scholars who are agnostic or atheistic are taking the sciences and the religions seriously because this relationship involves two of the dominant cultural forces of our time. Complicated and multilayered, the relationships among the various sciences and diverse world religions are not merely adversarial, nor simply a matter of neatly separable domains of discourse.¹⁶⁶

It behooves us, in other words, to bring together, to put it in extreme terms, the Middle Ages and Postmodernity, to listen to what intellectuals, spiritualists, visionaries, mystics, medical doctors, and philosophers had to say about human health in the past in order to grasp, once again, the true complexity of our being. There is no way and no need to argue against the enormous and breath-taking progress achieved in modern medicine, but even the most amazing accomplishments today do not necessarily satisfy the full need regarding true health, curiously deeply associated with happiness and spiritual fulfillment.

Already the intellectuals in antiquity were fully aware of the intricate correlation between body and mind with respect to health, as we can read as early as in Juvenal's *Satires* (X.356):

orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.
 fortem posce animum mortis terrore carentem,
 qui spatium vitae extremum inter munera ponat
 naturae, qui ferre queat quoscumque labores,
 nesciat irasci, cupiat nihil et potiores
 Herculis aerumnas credat saevosque labores
 et venere et cenis et pluma Sardanapalli.
 monstro quod ipse tibi possis dare; semita certe
 tranquillae per virtutem patet unica vitae.

[You should pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body.
 Ask for a stout heart that has no fear of death,
 and deems length of days the least of Nature's gifts
 that can endure any kind of toil,

166 Wentzel Vrede van Huyssteen, "Introduction" (see note 165), ix–x. As to the meaning of sacredness throughout times, see now *Sakralität und Sakralisierung: Perspektiven des Heiligen*, ed. Andrea Beck and Andreas Berndt. Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 13 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2013).

that knows neither wrath nor desire and thinks
 the woes and hard labors of Hercules better than
 the loves and banquets and downy cushions of Sardanapalus.
 What I commend to you, you can give to yourself;
 For assuredly, the only road to a life of peace is virtue.]¹⁶⁷

The same message resonated throughout the ages, as documented, for instance, by Cotton Mather's treatise *Mens sana in corpore sano: A discourse upon recovery from sickness. Directing how natural health, may be improved into spiritual: especially by them that have lately recovered it* from 1698.¹⁶⁸ While it would be a trite observation that we all want to enjoy our physical health, it remains a deeply challenging task for everyone to determine how to achieve that goal, whether we can rely on medicine alone, or whether we also need to embrace the spiritual approach to health, as we will examine in this volume through many different historical, literary, religious, and philosophical approaches.

XIX The Contributions and Thoughts of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925)

The quest for the spiritual fulfillment of human existence continues from the Middle Ages until today, and from here certainly also into the future. While the external conditions and concepts might certainly differ from each other, the overarching goal remains the same, that is, the drive, the dream, the desire, the hope, and the belief in the spiritual dimension of the material world. As the famous Austrian philosopher, social reformer, architect, and esotericist Rudolf Steiner formulated in his *Path to Knowledge*:

Complete inner selflessness is necessary for this surrender to the revelations of the new world. And if a man test himself to find out in what degree he has this power of surrender, he will make astonishing discoveries. Anyone who wishes to tread the path of higher knowledge must train himself to be able to obliterate himself, together with all his preconceptions at any and every moment. As long as he obliterates himself the other flows into him. Only a higher degree of such selfless surrender enables a man to imbibe the higher spiritual reali-

167 Here quoted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mens_sana_in_corpore_sano (last accessed on August 18, 2013). Juvenal, *The Satires: A Text*, with brief critical note, ed. E. Courtney. Instrumentum litterarum, 1 (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984).

168 Cotton Mather, *Mens sana in corpore sano: A discourse upon recovery from sickness. Directing how natural health, may be improved into spiritual: especially by them that have lately recovered it*. Early American Imprints. 1st series, 829 (Boston: Printed by B. Green, and J. Allen for Samuel Phillips, at the brick shop, 1698).

ties which surround him on all sides. This faculty can be consciously developed. A man can try for example to refrain from any judgment on people around him. He should obliterate within himself the gauge of attraction and repulsion of stupidity or cleverness, which he is accustomed to apply, and try without this gauge to understand people purely through themselves.¹⁶⁹

Moreover, in his treatises on “Theory of Human Nature” he addressed the binary nature of human existence, consisting both of the material and the spiritual dimension:

As such it [the body] opens itself through the sense-organs towards the outer world and becomes the soul-body. This the sentient soul permeates and becomes a unity with. The sentient soul does not merely receive the impact of the outer world as sensation, it has its own inner life which it fertilizes through thinking, on the other hand, as it does through sensations on the other. It thus becomes the intellectual soul. It is able to do this by opening itself to intuitions from above, as it does to sensations from below.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, as he then concludes, “When, now, the ‘I’ saturates itself with the Spirit-self, then this Spirit-self makes its appearance in such wise that the astral body is worked over from within the soul” (130). In other words, Steiner argues for an approach to human health that relies both on the material and the spiritual dimensions, and in this regard he closely followed many of the medieval perspectives outlined above.¹⁷¹ Science and mysticism, or poetic philosophy, simply formed for him a natural symbiosis, as Andrew Welburn observed: “the relationship to the object is conceived as producing cognitive change in just such a

169 Rudolf Steiner, *The Essential Steiner: Basic Writings of Rudolf Steiner*, ed. and intro. Robert A McDermott (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), “The Path of Knowledge,” 79–94; here 82–83. I cannot do justice to Steiner’s enormously prolific output of writings (up to 400 volumes!), but must acknowledge his profound impact on spirituality, education, music, anthropology, and religion; see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Steiner (last accessed on Feb. 24, 2014). See also Christoph Lindenberg, *Rudolf Steiner: A Biography*, trans. from the German by Jon McAlice (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2012). See also Gary Lachman, *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His life and Work* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2007). The major reason for including Steiner into our discussions simply rests in his far reaching efforts to combine spirituality and the sciences.

170 Steiner, “Theory of Human Nature,” *The Essential Steiner* (see note 169), 128–29.

171 See, for example, his treatise *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten?* (Dornach, CH: Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag am Goetheanum, 1935); cf. also his lectures, *Earthly Knowledge and Heavenly Wisdom: Nine Lectures Held in Dornach Between February 2 and February 18, 1923*, trans. Sabine H. Seiler (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1991); for a modern critique, see Andrew Welburn, *Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought* ([Edinburgh]: Floris, 2004).

way as Born supposed, so that the object is known strictly as part of a process, a transformation of state which intrinsically involves the knower.¹⁷² The process of acquiring knowledge is not a purely intellectual one, but involves a spiritual force as well: “The ‘idealist’ moment in the process of knowing ... emerges as part of a dynamic of knowledge, rooted in unconscious activity of the soul. What we really witness at that moment is not the ‘mind’ confronting the world, but rather disentangling itself from it.”¹⁷³

All this, of course, only touches on Steiner’s antroposophic and mystical philosophy, which made him, in many ways, a worthy continuator of thinkers such as Meister Eckhart, Jakob Böhme, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Here we only need to keep in mind how much he represented the ongoing debate about the relationship between the material and the spiritual dimension, and how much the bridge between both could establish the foundation for a spiritual form of mental health, not in opposition to, but in collaboration with the scientific exploration of this world.

XX Pre-modern Perspectives and Alternative/ Integrative Medicine

It behooves us, hence, to open our mind once again to some of the medieval observations regarding miracles, spirituality, and physical health, and to combine those with modern medical investigations, coupled with reflections on anthroposophy¹⁷⁴ and related theories, as alternative and integrative medicine have discovered only recently.¹⁷⁵ Steiner urged us strongly to reach out to the spiritual-scientific domain in order to gain not only a better understanding of our selves and hence realize more effective ways to achieve physical, because mental, health. In fact, he even uses the term “Spiritual Science” both in the medieval concept of macrocosm and microcosm, and in a very modern context and spiritual growth that can lead to mental, subsequently physical well-being, or both at the same

172 Andrew Welburn, *Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2004), 71.

173 Welburn, *Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy* (see note 172), 127. Steiner elaborated his thoughts in this regard most explicitly in his treatise *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten* (Dornach: Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag am Goetheanum, 1935); see also the fifteen lectures Steiner gave from July 29 to September 3, 1916, *The Riddle of Humanity: The Spiritual Background of Human History*, trans. John F. Logan (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1990).

174 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthroposophy> (last accessed on August 18, 2013).

175 Christine A. Larson, *Alternative Medicine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007).

time. The human intellect working through the brain can achieve only so much, while there is the intellect of the heart, or the soul, that requires much further development: “The faculty of acquiring knowledge through the logic of the heart is not by any means active yet to any great extent but the aptitude for it is already present in numbers of human beings.”¹⁷⁶

How the spirit would really learn about other, higher worlds, of which Steiner talks in general terms only, remains a riddle, but the medieval examples, and the comments by Paracelsus, coupled with countless other examples by early modern and modern mystics and spiritualists, such as Jacob Böhme,¹⁷⁷ might point the way toward a deeper understanding of the cosmic relationships between the human, material and the divine, spiritual spheres of existence. For Steiner, the human body already contains this knowledge which only needs to be awakened to work fully: “man possesses what we call his life-principle in common not only with the animals but also with the plant-world as a whole.”

When we look out into our environment, we perceive the plant-world all around us. A plant reveals itself to us as a being which, like man, is not subject entirely to physical and chemical laws; it follows these only when it dies” (187). And: “The external part of man which remains in the physical world during sleep consists of physical body and etheric body... . Hence even externally man is bound to confront us as an essentially different being because in him these bodies are permeated by the Ego and astral body” (187). Ultimately, and here very much in line with medieval and early modern ideas, Steiner suggests that human beings are profoundly and essentially determined by the cooperating and intersecting forces of macrocosm and microcosm (199–200).

Realizing our current limitations in the comprehension of our total reality, Steiner then concludes,

At the present time, when there is so little consciousness of the truth that the spiritual underlies everything material, people will believe all too readily that this or that breathing exercise can be advantageous. But once it is realised that everything physical has a spiritual foundation it will also be known that any modification of the breathing belongs to the sublimest of revelations of the spiritual in the physical; it should be associated with a mood of the soul that is akin to prayer, where knowledge becomes prayer. (201)

Amazingly, so it seems, current research of alternative medicine supports these views and adds significant confirmation and foundations. Happiness, above all,

176 Rudolf Steiner, *Macrocosm and Microcosm*, rev. trans. by D. S. O. and C. D. (1961; London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1968), 184.

177 See the contribution to this volume by Bo Andersson.

both a physical and especially a mental phenomenon, has proven to be extremely relevant for a person's physical health. Andrew Weil, in his recent study on *Spontaneous Happiness* (2011), determined, for instance, that "Contentment, serenity, comfort, balance, and resilience together constitute a *lagom* version of positive emotionality and ... a sane alternative to the perpetual happiness expected and demanded in our society."¹⁷⁸ The term *lagom* is Swedish and implies a good balance of having enough or about enough.

Evaluating the present world with the Middle Ages and other pre-modern cultures, he concludes that our notions about hard life or primitive living conditions in the past might be deeply misleading: "In fact, hard lives such as those of our ancestors and our 'primitive' contemporaries seem to keep the human emotional set point better adjusted. To state a complex change simply: our lives in the developed world have largely gone from *hard* and *generally content* to *easy* and *often depressed*" (39).

One way of achieving the goal set by integrative medicine suggested by Weil consists of combining a variety of approaches, both neuro-pharmaceutical and religious, cultural concepts and medical methods. For Weil and others, the search for "secular spirituality," not necessarily tied in with religion of any kind, could provide the necessary pathway toward a new understanding of health in a holistic fashion: "Without believing in the supernatural, one can recognize aspects of human experience that are not accounted for in the materialistic view" (169). Liberating us from the traditional constraints of the biomedical model of the past, we might gain a chance to comprehend human life in a very different way, that is, somewhat returning to medieval and pre-modern concepts, whether the search turns toward nature, the arts, personal enjoyments, friendship, love, or other non-material phenomena and activities (169–70). A practical approach might be to acquire a sense of empathy and compassion (179–81) and to practice forgiveness (181–83), to give in to joy and laughter (184–86), and to respect the power of silence (186–88), to mention some examples.

It would be inappropriate here to engage at great length with integrative medicine as it is practiced and researched today, since it would take us too far afield from the central concern of this book. I also have to admit that I as a Germanist in pre-modern literature know just too little about it to do justice to that field in a scholarly fashion. But we need to keep in mind that the exploration of the spiritual dimension of all existence has proven to be the most exciting pathway

¹⁷⁸ Andrew Weil, *Spontaneous Happiness* (New York, Boston, and London: Little, Brown and Company, 2011), 28.

toward true, profound concepts of health.¹⁷⁹ In this regard the past has to teach us very much once again, if sensitively adapted and translated appropriately for the need of our modern times.

Undoubtedly, no one wants to teach a crude form of belief in miracles, or in a simplistic approach to religion – at least not myself and the contributors to this volume. But as all the various voices cited so far have consistently confirmed, the material existence has always to be viewed in the context of spirituality, and vice versa. Mental health, and for that matter, any form of health, requires the metaphysical dimension, whether it might turn out to be an imagination by us humans or whether it truly exists. The fact that religious interpretations of this world have always been of great impact, especially in the pre-modern world, requires us to investigate the meanings of those perceptions, since they commonly resulted in actions, creative works, ideologies, and concepts dominating many if not most people's lives.

Of course, in our rationalized world determined by technocracy, electronic communication, and the world wide web, not to forget the many different fields of natural sciences, miracles and spirituality seem to be on their way out since the world is increasingly disenchanted and demystified, as Max Weber had already famously declared in his article on "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (1919).¹⁸⁰ But numerous scientists have questioned this rather naive pragmatism and pointed out the degree to which the world becomes increasingly mystified to us again the more we learn about its inner secrets and create machines and robots that carry out the basic functions in our lives. Weber, however, insisted that we do not need to understand every and each aspect of our existence to be in control of our own reality, since it would be enough to know that by means of rationality and intellectualization we could learn the mechanism and properties of all phenomena: "Nicht mehr, wie der Wilde, für den es solche [magische] Mächte gab, muß man zu magischen Mitteln reifen, um die Geister zu beherrschen oder zu erbitten.

179 Ernest Lawrence Rossi, *The Psychobiology of Mind-Body Healing: New Concepts of Therapeutic Hypnosis*. Rev. ed. (1986; New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993); Andrew Weil, *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health: a Proven Program for Taking Full Advantage of Your Body's Natural Healing Power*. Rev. ed. (1997; New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2006); see also the contributions to *Fundamentals of Complementary and Integrative Medicine*, ed. Marc S. Micozzi. Third ed. (1996; Philadelphia: Elsevier, 2006); David Rakel, *Integrative Medicine*. 2nd ed. (2003; Philadelphia, London, et al.: Saunders, 2007); as to the combination of Eastern with Western medicine, see Michael P. Milburn, *The Future of Healing: Exploring the Parallels of Eastern and Western Medicine* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 2001).

180 Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," id., *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1919; Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), 582–613; esp. 594.

Sondern technische Mittel und Berechnung leisten das” (One does not have to, as the primitive man did, for whom such magical powers existed, resort to magical means in order to control the spirits or to beg for their help. Instead, technical means and calculations do that).¹⁸¹

Oddly, almost in contradiction to all what we know and believe to understand today, the more we gain in scientific comprehension, the more we also seem to realize the infinitude and hence miraculous, perhaps divine, nature of the universe which no human mind will ever fully penetrate or learn to control.¹⁸² Very similar to the concept of the macrocosm and microcosm as perceived by medieval intellectuals and theologians, the ultimate challenges for modern sciences seem to be the nanosphere and the outer universe. Should we hence simply disregard the dimension of spirituality and religion as essential aspects of human existence?

Miracles, Natural Sciences, and Spirituality

Throughout the entire Middle Ages and the early modern age the debate continued, and resonates even today, as to the correlation between the scientific and the religious approach to the material world. Both Thomas Aquinas and Francis Bacon, Theophrastus von Hohenheim (Paracelsus) and Robert Boyle, to mention just a few significant names, strongly supported a holistic concept in the study of the physical dimension because the divine, the spiritual, or the religious can always be detected behind the material objects. Of course, for the Protestants miracles were something of the past, referring to the Old and the New Testament, whereas at their own time reports of miracles were viewed with great suspicion and distrust because they smacked of Catholicism, false enthusiasm, and extremely emotional perception of reality.

181 Weber, “Wissenschaft als Beruf” (see note 180), 594.

182 *Physik und Transzendenz: Die großen Physiker unseres Jahrhunderts über ihre Begegnung mit dem Wunderbaren*, ed. Hans-Peter Duerr. 3rd ed. (1986; Bern, Munich, et al.: Scherz, 1986). His anthology experienced an enormous popularity and has been re-edited numerous times until today. See also the contributions to *Cosmos, Bios, Theos: Scientists Reflect on Science, God, and the Origins of the Universe, Life, and Homo Sapiens*, ed. Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992). For the very opposite view, suggesting that religion has always served to repress scientific research and rationality, see Victor J. Stenger, *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012).

David Hume (1711–1776) the most famous critic of the belief in miracles, above all defined miracles as deviations from the law of nature, commenting in the tenth section of his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748): “a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent.”¹⁸³ Without completely rejecting the notion that miracles could happen, Hume essentially identified the causes of most miracle accounts as the result of superstition and ignorance of the scientifically verifiable conditions leading to a phenomenon.¹⁸⁴ Both the natural laws underlying virtually all natural phenomena and the verifiability of those through endless repetition have proven to be some of the strongest arguments against the belief in miracles, which are only reported by individuals, cannot be repeated, and hence defy all attempts as verification.

Nevertheless, in modern sciences we can observe a growing awareness that our understanding of this world continues to be contingent at best, and hypothetical most commonly, despite the preponderance of physical and chemical laws and the application of mathematical processes to identify our material existence. The so-called laws constitute only approximations and continue to be prone to exception, as the examples of thermo-dynamics and quantum physics illustrate. In fact, as Dirk Evers concludes, only the close correlation between happenstance and necessity in nature ultimately brought about human life:

Auf all diesen Ebenen vollziehen sich keine supranaturalen Durchbrechungen der Naturgesetze und doch deutet sich in den Kategorien des Einmaligen, des Außerordentlichen, des Nicht-Berechenbaren und des sich zu Gunsten unserer Existenz Fügenden der Ort an, an dem das Wunder auch in der entzauberten Natur seinen Platz haben kann.¹⁸⁵

[On all those levels there are not to be observed supranatural transgressions of the natural laws, and yet in the categories of the unique, the extraordinary, the non-countable, and the one force that makes things work in favor of our existence there is the space where the wonder might find its space even in disenchanted nature.]

The point of wonders is not, as Evers then sums up his reflections, to confirm or contradict the natural laws, but to highlight the extraordinary power of a differ-

183 David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge. Rpt. of the ed. from 1777. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 115. On Hume, see now the excellent survey article with a good select bibliography in *Wikipedia*, online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume (last accessed on Aug. 18, 2013).

184 Dirk Evers, “Wunder und Naturgesetze,” *Zeichen und Wunder* (see note 16), 66–87; here 73–74.

185 Evers, “Wunder und Naturgesetze” (see note 184), 81.

ent dimension behind the physical screen, whether divine or not, which would be nothing but a terminological concern. In fact, he goes so far as to confirm that the presence of all existence underscores the trustworthiness of God and His presence to human life, because creation itself, and so life by itself prove to be miracles of the first order.¹⁸⁶

XXI The Example by Heinrich Kaufringer: Didactic-Religious Suggestions

Let us briefly return to late-medieval literature to highlight the need to gain insights into older culture in order to comprehend new ways out of the straight-jacket of the modern theoretical paradigm. One of Heinrich Kaufringer's religious-didactic tales, composed around 1400, might illustrate this intriguing phenomenon even better than references to modern discussions of natural law and natural philosophy. We know very little about this author and can only say with certainty that he lived around the turn of the century and composed a larger collection of verse narratives which we commonly call *mæren*.¹⁸⁷

In the verse narrative "Der Einsiedler und der Engel" (no. 1; The Hermit and the Angel), a hermit is curious about the world after all and travels for some time, when he is accompanied by a stranger. The first night they stay in an inn where they are treated most generously by the keeper and his wife and do not even have to pay. But the stranger suffocates their newborn child early in the morning just before their departure, and this to the absolute horror of the hermit. The next night they also find a warm welcome in an inn, but the stranger steals the inn-keeper's most valuable chalice. Curiously, he uses that as excessive payment

¹⁸⁶ Evers, "Wunder und Naturgesetze" (see note 184), 85–86.

¹⁸⁷ Heinrich Kaufringer, *Werke*, ed. Paul Sappeler. Vol. 1: *Texte* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1972). For a critical study of his narratives, see Marga Stede, *Schreiben in der Krise: die Texte des Heinrich Kaufringer*. Literatur, Imagination, Realität, 5 (Trier: WVT, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1993); Michaela Willers, *Heinrich Kaufringer als Märenautor: das Oeuvre des cgm 270* (Berlin: Logos-Verlag, 2002); cf. also Albrecht Classen, "Mord, Totschlag, Vergewaltigung, Unterdrückung und Sexualität. Liebe und Gewalt in der Welt von Heinrich Kaufringer," *Daphnis* 29.1–2 (2000): 3–36; id., "Love, Marriage, and Sexual Transgressions in Heinrich Kaufringer's Verse Narratives (ca. 1400)," *Discourse on Love, Marriage, and Transgression in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 278 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004 [appeared in 2005]), 289–12; id., "Was There a German 'Geoffrey Chaucer' in the Late Middle Ages? The Rediscovery of Heinrich Kaufringer's Verse Narratives as Literary Masterpieces," *Studia Neophilologica* 85.1 (2013): 57–72.

to the inn-keeper of the third night, although there they were treated miserably and felt badly abused. When they finally cross a bridge to enter a city, the stranger happens to see a young man come running after them, and as soon as the latter has reached them, the stranger tosses him into the river and thus drowns him.

The poor hermit is completely upset and distraught, bitterly condemning the stranger as the devil's servant. Only then does the stranger reveal himself to be an angel sent to the hermit to teach him a lesson. As he explains, the first couple had been infertile for a long time, when God had finally granted them a child. However, being completely infatuated with their infant, they had completely turned away from God and focused entirely on the child, trying to make as much money as possible to guarantee the child a good life. Although a miracle had happened in their life, as the angel emphasizes ("wider der natur eigenschaft," 356; against the laws of nature), they had disregarded that message and thus actually turned to sinfulness. The second inn-keeper receives high praise from the angel, except that he had accepted the chalice as an illegitimate pawn, threatening the well-being of his soul. The third inn-keeper received the chalice because his soul was already completely rotten and doomed to end up in hell. The angel granted him some joy here in life with the chalice, while his soul would have to suffer in eternity. Finally, the angel killed the young man not because he had been a very evil person and had committed many crimes, but because he had recently repented his sins and rushed to see a priest in the city. However, the angel foresaw that he would not have the spiritual stamina to withstand the worldly temptations, so by drowning him in the river he shortened his life and secured the salvation of his soul.

The angel finally advises the hermit, and hence the audience of this narrative:

"... darumb, vil lieber pruoder mein,
ker wider in die clusen dein,
wann all die wunder, die got tuot,
die beschehen nur durch guot.
darmit bekümer dich nit mer
und vol also meiner ler,
so pist behalten ewiglich." (435–40)

["... hence, my dear brother,
return to your hermit's cell,
since all the miracles that God does
happen only for good reasons.
Do no longer care about it
and follow my teaching,
then your soul will be saved in eternity."]

In a typically late medieval fashion, of course, here we are told to accept life in its divine creativity without questioning ultimately what the reasons for right or wrong might be, why injustice and violence occur, and how to lead a good life. Instead, as Kaufringer tries to suggest, the individual is not capable of comprehending the correlations between macro- and microcosm, and can only embrace the world as is because evil and goodness are divided not according to a human plan, but according to God's own design.

Kaufringer does not talk about the material conditions of human life; instead he is concerned with moral, ethical, spiritual, and hence religious aspects. The critical question both here in his narrative and in our own existence pertains to how we handle our lives, how we are to interact with other people, and how we are to come to terms with death. The entire debate about the 'truth' or 'illusion' of miracles does not even pertain to the issues that arise here, and which I have discussed already at length above. We need to distinguish between the natural sciences, hence natural conditions, and spirituality, hence human conditions. While the sciences allow us to penetrate ever deeply into the material framework, the humanities serve as the critical platform to investigate the human soul and metaphysical conditions. Both are complementary, not exclusive, but one should not judge the one area by the criteria of the other.

Although many of the literary, spiritual, and religious aspects mentioned above do not seem to lend themselves easily to new approaches in postmodern medicine, there is one crucial element that proves to be the red line, the crux to all matter and all work being done in the sciences and in the humanities, hence which connects, in a most surprising manner, the pre-modern world with us: the deep sense of hope, whether for God's mercy and blessing, whether for a spiritual transformation, whether for a miraculous healing, or whether for a good and happy life. Even contemporary neurosurgeons such as Allan J. Hamilton provide startling evidence to support that claim because our brain obviously receives more input, to speak now from a poetic perspective, from the heart than we moderns have thought possible, but which medieval people understood in many ways much better. In his *The Scalpel and the Soul*, Hamilton emphasizes that medical doctors need to have not only medical, surgical, and other 'technical' knowledge, but that they also would be well advised to consider spiritual conditions, hence the soul, a wonderful but mysterious metaphor for the non-material make-up of human existence.¹⁸⁸

188 Allan J. Hamilton, *The Scalpel and the Soul: Encounters with Surgery, the Supernatural, and the Healing Power of Hope* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2008). See also the contri-

He openly admits, as a neurosurgeon, that there is the odd element of pure luck, though we “are not its masters but rather its playthings” (217). Medical doctors need to care for their patients, hence establish an emotional bond which dramatically increases the chances for the ill person’s recovery. As he emphatically underscores: “Let go of your fear and panic. Entrust yourself into that doctor’s hands. Create your critical partnership, your kinship with that clinician” (218). Quality of life is really all that matters, not quantity (218–19). Death must be accepted as part of life, and as the portal to another existence, irrespective of whether one is religious or not (219–21), and it arrives at its own time (221–22). Music, as Hamilton emphasizes, and this to my own personal delight, “can be a powerful adjunct to the healing process. And music is one of the safest medicines you’ll ever find” (226).¹⁸⁹ Healing is considerably accelerated if the patient is accompanied by a loved-one, 24/7, or if the patient can regain health at home in the most comfortable environment (228). Personal happiness, if not love, proves to be, hence, almost the magical charm, which indicates that health depends very much on the spiritual well-being, and that negativity, wherever it might be coming from, could simply kill us, first the spirit, then the body (231). Without personal dignity, however, nothing will prosper in our lives, and we easily become victims of diseases, and then might die. Health is deeply a matter of spirituality as well. As anecdotal most of Hamilton’s reflections might sound, they are all drawn from practical experience in the hospital, and we ought to listen to the expert who has seen both sides of the coin, being as critical about his own profession as about the radical, emotion-driven rejection of the medical world altogether.

butions to Surgical Palliative Care, ed. Geoffrey P. Dunn and Alan G. Johnson. Supportive Care Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

189 *Music That Works: Contributions of Biology, Neurophysiology, Psychology, Sociology, Medicine and Musicology*, ed. Roland Haas and Vera Brandes (Vienna and New York: Springer, 2008); for historical perspectives supporting this phenomenon, see Chad Stephen Hamill, *Songs of Power and Prayer in the Columbia Plateau: The Jesuit, the Medicine Man, and the Indian Hymn Singer*. First Peoples (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); see also the contributions to *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology*, ed. Benjamin D. Koen, with Jacqueline Lloyd, Gregory Barz, and Karen Brummel-Smith (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Cf. also Hanspeter Dvorak, *Atem und Musik in der Heilkunst: uraltes Erfahrungswissen und neue wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2012). Much research on medicine and music is also carried out in France; see, for example, Isabelle Bégon *Musicothérapie en réanimation pédiatrique: une aide au bébé en détresse*. Collection “Les Cahiers” (Parempuyre [Gironde]: Ed. du Non-verbal, 2013). But this enormous function of music in the healing process has already been observed much earlier; see, for instance, Jacques Chevalier, “La Musique comme adjuvant des anesthésies périphériques,” Ph.D. thesis, Paris 1956. The relevant research literature on this new topic is legion, and so is the number of related studies built on practical experiences.

Intriguingly, and this will be the special emphasis of this volume, the modern and ‘new’ insights into the much more complex conditions of our physical existence can find surprising correspondences in ancient, medieval, and early modern narratives, music, and the visual arts, since the very limits of the medical sciences then forced the medical practitioners, or rather made it possible for them, to look for alternatives, resorting to herbal medicine, for instance, or to rely on perhaps magical, or simply spiritual remedies.¹⁹⁰ Some of the insights proffered by Syriac or Arabic scientists from the early Middle Ages might suddenly prove to be much more relevant (still) today than we might have assumed, such as in the case of the ninth-century treatise by Ḥunayn ibn Isāq al-‘Ibādī (ca. 809–873).¹⁹¹ The same might apply to the art of narratives with medical implications, through soothing or spiritual sympathy, thus allowing internal antibodies to gain the upper hand, to formulate it somewhat imprecisely and reflecting an on-going guess work in this regard.¹⁹²

The very and deliberate *bricolage* of the presented material here clearly indicates that we are still far away from a concise, holistic, and integrative approach to human health and existence simply because of the huge number of factors involved. But we are beginning to bring together various disciplines and multifarious voices, including those from the medieval past, when herbal medicine, for instance, was of supreme importance and must have achieved, at least to some extent, its desired effects.¹⁹³

While the classical-antique humoral teaching developed by Galen exerted the greatest influence on medieval medical thinking and practice, by the sixteenth century, especially as a consequence of the teachings of the famous physician, theologian, alchemist, and researcher Theophrastus von Hohenheim, known commonly as Paracelsus, the foundation for a new concept was laid, paving the way for innovative medical practices. As Bernhard Haage now comments:

190 William H. York, *Health and Wellness in Antiquity Through the Middle Ages*. Health and Wellness in Daily Life (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012)

191 *Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq's "Questions on Medicine for Students": Transcription and Translation of the Oldest Extant Syriac Version (Vat. Syr. 192)* by E. Jan Wilson and Samuel Dinkha. Biblioteca apostolica vaticana. Manuscript. Vat. Syr. 192 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 2010).

192 *Textual Healing: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*, ed. Elizabeth Lane Furdell. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 110 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005).

193 Helmut Birkhan, *Pflanzen im Mittelalter: Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2012).

Welche Arznei, das hieß in Antike und Mittelalter fast ausschließlich: welche Heilpflanze, eventuell welche Heilerde oder welches Heilmittel tierischer Provenienz für welches Leiden heranzuziehen war, wussten die Vertreter der hippokratisch-galenischen Humoralpathologie ebenso wie der Neuerer Paracelsus im besten, also im Erfolgsfall, entweder aus überkommenem empirischen Gut der *Materia medica* oder aus eigener Beobachtung. Hinzu trat die Theorie. Aufgrund seiner Ablehnung der Humoralpathologie suchte Paracelsus das therapeutische Geschehen in einem makro-mikrokosmischen Gesamtsystem theoretisch zu verankern¹⁹⁴

[The representatives of the hippocratic-galenic humoral pathology and the innovator Paracelsus knew in the best, that is, in the successful case, what medicine to use for the right treatment either from the empirical information gleaned from the *Materia medica* or from their own observations. That medicine was made, both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages, almost exclusively, from herbs, medicinal minerals, or medicine derived from animals.]

At closer analysis, we can discover a wide range of sources from which pre-modern medicine was derived. On the one hand we observe the ancient tradition, mostly preserved by the Arabs and finally transmitted to medieval Europe via Hebrew and then Latin translations at the intellectual centers (universities) of Salerno near Naples and Toledo, Spain. Then medicine developed considerably in medieval monasteries, based on empirical studies, biblical training, and some classical learning. But much practical knowledge derived from personal observations and oral traditions, including even magical charms, and so it is not surprising that we find, at least for a long time well into the fifteenth century, numerous women involved in the medical field. European medicine differed to some extent remarkably from Arabic medicine because the former could rely on wine and distillation methods, which had a considerable effect for the development of alcohol-based medicines, as first outlined by the Spanish scholar Arnaud de Villeneuve (ca. 1235–1311), in his *Liber de vinis*.¹⁹⁵

Intriguingly, even here, the medical orientation never loses spirituality out of sight, as Christine Caldwell Ames summarizes in her review:

Yet beyond the text's practicalities, or rather vivifying and elevating them, is the author's delegation of wine's powers to divine providence and his location of medicine within a spiritual frame. Wine approached curative perfection in its preservation of virtues and

194 Bernhard Dietrich Haage, "Naturphilosophische Grundlagen der Pflanzenheilkunde im Mittelalter," *Mediaevistik* 26 (forthcoming). I thank the author for letting me quote from the article before its publication.

195 Arnaud de Villeneuve, *Le Livre des Vins*, traduit du latin, présenté et annoté par Patrick Gifreu (Perpignan: Les éditions de la Merci, 2011). For a review, see Christine Caldwell Ames in *The Medieval Review* (online), 12–5–2.

balancing of humors. And as Patrick Gifreu notes, for the author health was spirituality, the pondering of the natural world and its influences upon the body finally illuminative of God's relationship with the soul. Both soul and body were transformed by wine: "C'est un bien-fait pour le corps mais aussi pour 'âme" (45). God, "généreux donateur de tous les biens," was master of sickness and sadness as well as health; "Dieu tire profit de la maladie," which directed the Christian to consolation (38).

For Arnaud, wine proves to be good for virtually all people, depending on the medical conditions, age, and gender, but he emphasizes, of course, that progress and countless discoveries and inventions in medicine, especially since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have had revolutionary effects, which do not need to be discussed here. Nevertheless, modern integrative medicine has begun to pay more respect to what their medieval predecessors had to say, and we might reach an intriguing new plateau in our critical investigations of what it means to be human and to be well as a physical being if we pursue those two prongs, medieval and postmodern, much more than ever before. Or, in other words, the humanistic and the medical perspective, since both belong together, of course, as we know from past and present experiences. As we can read in the modern French translation by Patrick Gifreu,

Le vin possède des propriétés importantes pour la nature humaine. Rufus est catégorique. Le vin ne conforte pas seulement la chaleur naturelle, il clarifie le sang, élargit les artères, désengorge le foie, soulage le cœur et conforte les membres. C'est un bien fait pour le corps mais aussi pour l'âme. Il l'élève en lui apportant la joie qui fait oublier la tristesse. (44–455)

[Wine possesses important qualities for the human nature. Rufus is categorical in that regard. Wine does not only comfort only the natural heat, but it clarifies the blood, enlarges the arteries, decreases the liver, comforts the heart and the various other bodily limbs. It is a well-being for the [entire] body, but also for the heart. It lifts it up in support of the joy which makes you forget sadness.]

But apart from natural remedies serving in their function to heal human sickness, medieval and early modern writers regularly suggested psychological, spiritual functions bringing about physical well-being, especially when that involved a female character.

In medieval courtly literature we often come across examples of love proving to be the ultimate panacea, especially when applied by a woman. Near-dead Riwalin is rescued by his beloved Blancheflûr in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), who visits his tent pretending to be a medical doctor. Although the knight does not seem to have much strength left in his body, the passion between both rejuvenates him, and so, with God's help, as the narrator emphasizes, he regains strength, and recovers his health. Significantly, however, not without first having impregnated Blancheflûr, divine intervention makes the impossible

possible after all because “sus genas er, wan ez solte wesen” (1330; he recovered because that was God’s plan).¹⁹⁶ Gottfried developed here a fairly unique motif, since other authors dealing with the same material ignored to mention that love healed Riwalin. Nevertheless, according to Kurt Ruh, there is a sacramental element in this famous scene, in which love and death mysteriously intertwine, and where God grants life back to the moribund man because he wants him to live for Blanche-flûr’s love, and hence to become Tristan’s father.¹⁹⁷

If we pursued the development of this romance further, we would come across what Peter Meister calls a “healing cluster,”¹⁹⁸ involving the Irish Queen Isolde, Isolde the Fair, and her chamber maid Brangæne. However, we also need to keep in mind the poison which the Queen had given to her brother to dip his sword in which almost would have killed Tristan. But she later heals Tristan, whom she mistakes as Tantris, not realizing his cunning strategy, in return for him teaching her daughter in music and other skills. Further, Tristan would have almost been executed by the Irish princess while sitting in a bath tub when she realizes that he had killed her Uncle Morold in the feud over the control of the Kingdom of Cornwall. Only the intervention of Brangæne and the Queen herself prevent this tragic outcome. Finally, we would have to consider the near fatal consequences of the famous love potion brewed by Queen Isolde for her daughter, intended to grant her happiness in her ill-fated marriage with King Mark.

Women heal and threaten to kill, depending on the circumstances, but in any case they command much control over the men’s life both in Gottfried’s romance and in other courtly narratives.¹⁹⁹ A famous example would also be the unfortunate princess in Marie de France’s *lai* “Guigemar” (ca. 1170–1190).²⁰⁰ Her old and jealous husband virtually keeps her as a prisoner and tries to coax her into loving him, though without any success. When wounded Guigemar arrives with the

196 Gottfried von Straßburg, *Tristan*. Nach dem Text von Friedrich Ranke neu herausgegeben, ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt, mit einem Stellenkommentar und einem Nachwort von Rüdiger Krohn (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980); the best introduction to this famous romance currently proves to be the one by Tomas Tomasek, *Gottfried von Straßburg* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007).

197 Kurt Ruh, *Höfische Epik des Mittelalters*. Vol. 2. Grundlagen der Germanistik, 25 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1980), 239. See also Danielle Buschinger, “Gottfried’s Adaptation of the Story of Riwalin and Blanscheflur,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”*, ed. Will Hasty. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 73–86.

198 Peter Meister, *The Healing Female in the German Courtly Romance*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 523 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1990), 114.

199 Doggett, *Love Cures: Healing and Love Magic in Old French Romance* (see note 22).

200 Peggy McCracken, “Women and Medicine in Medieval French Narrative,” *Exemplaria* 5.2 (1993): 238–49.

magical ship, she takes him to her chambers and heals him, and in that process both fall in love with each other, feeling deeply tortured by this new emotion. At that point the poet intervenes and comments on the nature of love, which deserves to be quoted here at length:

Love is a wound within, the body, no evidence of which is seen on the outside; this is a sickness that lasts a long time, for it comes from nature... . Anyone who can find a loyal lover is to serve him and love him truly and do as he wishes. Guigemar was desperately in love: either he will find an immediate cure, or he will have to live as a wretch. Love gave him courage; he revealed his desires to her.²⁰¹

While Marie de France does not specifically explore the correlation between love and the medical profession exercised by women at courts, her example reemphasizes the significant perception by medieval writers that external, physical wounds actually reflect on wounds of the heart, and require spiritual treatment, hence love fulfillment. Not surprisingly, well into the seventeenth, if not even the eighteenth century, there was a wide-spread assumption that unfulfilled love could lead to a severe form of illness, the *amor hereos*.²⁰² As Mary F. Wack defines it,

At the root of lovesickness lies an unfulfilled, sometimes unspeakable desire that may be incestuous or otherwise socially unacceptable. Yet the mind and body are such close partners that bodily symptoms reveal what the patient represses. Sighing, sleeplessness, and wasting from refusal to eat betray the mind's effort to master its overwhelming passion. The clever physician can interpret these signs and penetrate to the cause of the malady. Medicine, however, treats the body, a commixture of elements. Its remedies cannot transgress so far against social norms as to prescribe incestuous love.²⁰³

201 *The Lays of Marie de France*, trans., with intro. and commentary, by Edward J. Gallagher (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2010), 10. For recent critical views on Marie, see the contributions to *A Companion to Marie de France* (see note 37), especially Roberta L. Krueger, "The Wound, the Knot, and the Book: Marie de France Literary Traditions of Love in the *Lais*" (55–87); cf. now also Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France* (see note 36); however, the relationship between healing and women is not explored here or there. Helpful in our context proves to be the study by Janet Hamilton, "Ruses du destin: Blessures et guérisons dans l'univers chevaleresque," *Écriture de la ruse*, ed. Elzbieta Grodek and Nicole Boursier. Faux Titre: Etudes de Langue et Littérature Françaises (FauxT), 190 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 61–69.

202 Mary F. Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990);

203 Wack, *Lovesickness* (see note 202), 5.

We would fool ourselves, however, if we relegated lovesickness to the box with ill-conceived, false, if not even absurd concepts and ideas harbored by people in the allegedly 'dark' Middle Ages. The following centuries experienced a very strong interest in this para-medical phenomenon, as witnessed by the major treatise on this topic by Jacques Ferrand (ca. 1575–after 1623), his *De la maladie d'amour ou melancholie erotique*, first printed in 1623, reprinted many times thereafter, and translated into English first in 1640.²⁰⁴ We cannot evaluate the validity of this odd phenomenon at this point, but we can certainly recognize it as further evidence for the strong relationship between body and mind as perceived by many scholars, poets, and lay people in the pre-modern age. Moreover, even if we might no longer treat lovesickness as a specific medical condition, there is no doubt that many people today, perhaps even more than ever before, experience deep traumatic suffering from unfulfilled love, lost love, or repressed love.²⁰⁵ Of course, we cannot simply revert the formula that true love leads to health, or that one supports or establishes the other. It all depends on a good balance, and happy the person who enjoys love and good health. I would dare say, however, that an individual who loves and is being loved can expect to have better health than a lone and sorrowful person.²⁰⁶

In short, body and mind always have to be treated as a holistic unit, which leads us to the conclusion that the broad-ranging discussion of mental and physical health, spirituality, and religion in the pre-modern world offers intriguing

204 Jacques Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, trans. and ed. and with a critical intro. and notes by Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 16–21. See also Massimo Peri, *Malato d'amore: la medicina dei poeti e la poesia dei medici. Medioevo romanzo e orientale*: Studi, 7 (Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro), et al.: Rubbettino, 1996); Marion A. Wells, *The Secret Wound: Love-Melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007). See also the contributions to *Les fous d'amour au Moyen Age: Orient-Occident: actes du colloque tenu en Sorbonne les 29, 30 et 31 mars 2001*, textes réunis et publ. par Claire Kappler et Suzanne Thiolier-Mejean. Logiques du spirituel (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008); cf. now Lesel Dawson, *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern English Literature*. Oxford Scholarship Online (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

205 This is well discussed in the informative article in the German *Wikipedia*, online at: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liebeskummer> (last accessed on July 13, 2013).

206 Martin Plöderl, *Sexuelle Orientierung, Suizidalität und psychische Gesundheit*. Psychologie – Forschung – aktuell, 22 (Weinheim: Beltz/PVU, 2005); Jerry L. Ainsworth, *Love & Health: Twelve Primary Ingredients, Showing How to Balance Your Physical, Mental and Spiritual Well-Being* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2006). The number of scholarly and popular books, many of the quality of coffee table books, is, as to be expected, legion. The best example to illustrate what love could mean for one's physical well-being can be found in Hartmann von Aue's verse narrative, "Der arme Heinrich," which I have discussed above.

perspectives that continue until today to be of relevance and significance, if we recognize in the material discussed (literature, art works, music, religious and medical texts, etc.) metaphorical expressions of that psychological dimension to which postmodern medicine apparently seems to be inclined to return once again, entering a heretofore ignored but probably quite happy marriage of historically determined Humanities and Religion with Medicine of the most postmodern kind, but now also deeply influenced by insights gained from medieval and early modern history and culture.²⁰⁷

Historical investigations also focusing on health care issues harmoniously merge with literary analysis pertaining to medical tracts and episodes in courtly romances dealing with sickness, depression, and dying. The same applies to many different aspects in the Humanities which suddenly find themselves in a highly productive intellectual marriage with the History of Medicine and Modern Integrative or Alternative Medicine.²⁰⁸ The history of art and music also allow us to comprehend more subtle concepts of health, since the products or objects in both fields operate with the spiritual dimension in human life, aiming both for harmony and enlightenment, which can often, however, also lead to dissonance and disharmony.

As historians of medieval medicine are increasingly alerting us, it might be high time to revisit some of the general discussion on health (bodily and mental) in the Middle Ages as a valuable depository of powerful ideas, concepts, and concrete recipes that could be utilized again in our modern day and age by way of a careful translation into modern terms. After all, since people in the pre-modern world did not yet have the same plethora of medication and scientifically based medical approaches available as we do, they commonly had to rely on alternative methods and strategies, often relying more on spiritual than on physical healing. It looks as if we today might have much to learn once again from our predecessors more than half a millennium ago without falling back to absurd or foolish concepts which were certainly prevalent in the past as well.²⁰⁹

207 I would like to express my gratitude to my dear colleague Marilyn L. Sandidge, Westfield State University, for her critical reading of this introduction. Thomas G. Benedek, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, also alerted me to some problems; but all remaining errors are, of course, my own.

208 See the contributions to *Gesund und krank im Mittelalter* (see note 23).

209 Wolfram Schmitt, *Medizinische Lebenskunst: Gesundheitslehre und Gesundheitsregimen im Mittelalter*. *Medizingeschichte*, 5 (Münster, Berlin, et al.: LIT, 2013). See also Francis B. Brévar, "Between Medicine, Magic, and Religion: Wonder-Drugs in German Medico-Pharmaceutical Treatises of the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries," *Speculum* 83 (2008): 1–57. He rightly warns us to decry all pre-modern medical methods and medicines, wonder-drugs, or amulets,

The present volume hopes to contribute to this mutual learning process. Ultimately, we believe, everyone on both sides of the traditional divide will profit from it in academic terms; and perhaps this might then have deep consequences for the wider audience, particularly those who are looking for productive alternatives to modern medicine.

Sometimes the answers to modern questions simply rest in the past which seems to have anticipated our future already a long time ago. Until today, after all, serious pharmacological research pertains to herbal medicine, and this very much in the medieval tradition, though now based on modern insights in chemical and homeopathic conditions.²¹⁰ One of the latest approaches to health care, complementary and alternative therapies, or CAM, seems to be, at least from our perspective, directly or indirectly connected with pre-modern methods of health-care and medical treatment, which embraced the soul as much as the body as essential components of our physical existence and worked with both equally to achieve the desired healing effect.²¹¹

But this volume on *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion* was not born from the dream that we might be able to reactivate medieval medicine combined with the Christian (or Buddhist) faith, for example, in order to establish new means of alternative and integrative medicine. Instead, the other contributors and myself

and the like, as fake and as the product of perverted minds. Healing was, after all, achieved through all kinds of strategies and with many sorts of products, perhaps because faith in God's miraculous working was so great. Cf. Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. Magic in History (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). See also the contribution to this volume by Susanna Niiranen. However, we should also not forget that the medical profession in the Middle Ages and the early modern age operated quite effectively and had many tools available to help the sick and infirm; see, for instance, Mareike Temmen, *Das 'Abdinghofer Arzneibuch': Edition und Untersuchung einer Handschrift mittelniederdeutscher Fachprosa*. Niederdeutsche Studien, 51 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2006).
210 Heinz Schlicher and Ludwig Pfefferle, *aporello Heilpflanzen: Gegen viele Beschwerden ist ein Kraut gewachsen* (Stuttgart: Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 2013); Markus Wiesnauer and Annette Kerckhoff, *Homöopathie für die ganze Familie*. 11th, updated and revised edition. Erlebnis Gesundheit (2000; Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 2013).

211 Lisa M. Schafer, Clarissa Hsu, Emery Rose Eaves, Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Judith Turner, Daniel C. Cherkin, Colette Sims, and Karen J. Sherman, "Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Providers' Views of Chronic Low Back Pain Patients' Expectations of CAM Therapies: A Qualitative Study," *Complementary Alternative Medicine* 12.234 (2012), online at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/12/234>. See also Jennifer J. Thompson, Kimberly L. Kelly, Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Allison L. Hopkins, Colette M. Sims, and Stephen J. Coons, "Developing a Patient-Centered Outcome Measure for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Therapies II: Refining Content Validity Through Cognitive Interviews," *Complementary Alternative Medicine* 11 (2011): 136 (17 pp.), online at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/11/136>.

are all trying to gain deeper understanding of what spirituality meant and implied for people in the pre-modern age both with respect to the body and to the spirit. We are not pursuing an approach determined by ‘new age,’ or similar modern spiritual strategies and operations. Instead, we are looking at concrete historical, art-historical, and literary-historical cases in order to comprehend what the discourse on all those ineffable phenomenon might have been like and what relevance it might still have for us today, both for our physical and our spiritual well-being.

XXII Summaries of the Contributions

Next I will provide brief summaries of and reflections on the individual contributions to draw out the essential aspects and to establish a cohesion among the individual papers as much as possible, since they all share a common denominator concerning the history of mental health, spirituality, and religion. These summaries always served also as critical tools to check with the authors to what extent their major thesis was clearly formulated and comprehensively argued. Each summary was carefully edited and read by the authors and then by myself again, until an agreement was reached. This process allowed us to review and revise the original article once again, adding an extra layer of critical examination regarding the flow and meaning of the arguments, giving us many more tools than the usual peer review process. Occasionally I have then also reflected on related research and added additional references. Hopefully this will increase the scholarly value of these summaries and of this volume altogether.

One of the oddest and yet also deeply fascinating aspects of the Middle Ages (and also the early modern age if we focus on the history of the Catholic Church) seems to be the strong cult of saints. These were human beings who were graced by God to gain the status of sainthood because of their extraordinary lifestyle, values, ideals, actions for others, devotion, and piety. People strongly needed saints because they established personal links between the individual here on earth and the afterlife, that is, heaven. But in the course of time the status of saints could change, and the faithful tended to alter their ideas about individual saints. While St. Peter was first venerated as a martyr, he later gained the most respect as the founder of the Holy Sea, only to witness a new cult as a repentant later, having shed tears for his sins at the hour of Christ’s Passion. Saints such as Christopher and Catherine of Alexandria have officially lost their status in recent times, that is, since 1970, though local traditions vary considerably in that regard. Studying the medieval (and early modern) cult of saints allows us today to gain deep insight both into the history of mentality and into past concepts of spirit-

uality.²¹² Most curiously, people throughout time have discovered very individually that their faith in saints has helped them to gain physical health, and this in most miraculous circumstances, which in turn has given those to whom they have prayed the official recognition as saints.

Much research has been done focusing on saints in the Middle Ages. In her contribution, Maedhbh M. Nic Dhonnchadha, building on previous scholarship, examines the famous saint of Ireland, Saint Brigit of Kildare (ca. 452/456–524/528), who has not left anything in writing by herself, but who has enjoyed an enormous popularity already during her lifetime and ever since, considering that her cult was already well established since the middle of the sixth century.²¹³ She was identified as the Irish Virgin Mary, and even recognized as a bishop, for which there are no known parallels. Moreover, various authors created nine different *vitae* of Brigit, which underscores the abundant respect and admiration which she enjoyed. She is considered, next to St. Patrick and St. Columba, one of the patron saints of Ireland, but her cult extends far beyond the limits of that island nation. Her relics, material and immaterial, can be found all over Europe, and she is worshipped at many places on the European continent, such as in Salzburg, Austria, Cologne, Germany, and Lumiar near Lisbon, Portugal. Despite all that ‘fame,’ however, St. Brigit was mostly overshadowed by the two other patron saints of Ireland for political reasons, which signals how much sainthood could be an important function in dynastic maneuvers and national struggles for supremacy.

Whether individual saints such as St. Brigit really performed miracles, as it was regularly reported, as evidence of their saintly character, of course, or whether those miracles were made up by later hagiographers, does not really matter in the larger schema of things since the central question focuses really on what role a saint played in spiritual terms for the faithful and what this worship can tell us about the cult itself at specific points in time.

The saint’s function has always been his or her power to serve as intercessor, and hence to build bridges between the earthly and the divine existence. But from a historical perspective, we also have to realize, as Nic Dhonnchadha informs us,

212 Edward Mornin and Lorna Mornin, *Saints: A Visual Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006); Esther Meier, *Handbuch der Heiligen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010); David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. 5th rev. ed. Oxford Paperback References (1978; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

213 Lisa M. Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kildare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); see also the very useful survey online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigit_of_Kildare (last accessed on Feb. 17, 2014).

following previous research on this topic, how much a saint's life (*vita*) served extremely important functions in securing a monastery's social, economic, and political position, and also in garnering much fame and reputation for the author of that life because he or she could be so instrumental in establishing the fame of a monastery.

In the case of St. Brigit, and other early Irish saints, Nic Dhonnchadha suggests that she substituted, as part of an extensive ecclesiastical strategy in the very early Christian missionizing efforts, ancient heroic figures, making the transition of the pagan to the Christian world more fluid and acceptable for the people.²¹⁴ Many factors contribute to the argument that the hagiographers predicated the cult of St. Brigit on an ancient Irish goddess, which then made possible her considerable and wide-spread popularity. This is, of course, a quite typical phenomenon in early medieval Christian missionary activities all over the European continent.

While the hagiographers intended to establish a political base for a monastery, for instance, the ultimate effect of the hagiography was to allow people to seek help from this new or rather old divinity, the saintly female who could intercede on their behalf and thus provide spiritual help in material conditions. It did not matter, of course, what little biographical information there was available about St. Brigit, as long as Christian prayers could reach her and convince her to offer help coming from God to the individual. Nic Dhonnchadha thus illustrates some of the fundamental workings of all medieval hagiography, which has, perhaps not so surprisingly, carried over to the new cult of St. Brigit of Kildare since the nineteenth century. Sainthood is, after all, a ponderous mark of extraordinary quality, influence, divine grace and privilege, and a sign of transcendental powers invested by God in the saint herself or himself who lived here on earth and facilitates, now in the afterlife, building connection with God Himself.²¹⁵

Apart from numerous cases of mystical visions and revelations, or of witchcraft and demonic possessions, medieval chroniclers also know of incidences that we would identify clearly as examples of mental disturbance, or madness. Or were they? As difficult as it often seems to be today to reach a medical-sci-

214 The same has already been argued with respect to the Old Saxon *Heliand* (early ninth century, monastery Fulda, Germany), in which the account of Christ's appearance and Passion was rendered in terms of the pre-Christian heroic world. See *The Heliand: The Saxon Gospel*. A translation and commentary by G. Ronald Murphy, S.J. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); see now also his *Tree of Salvation: Ygdrasil and the Cross in the North* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

215 Edward Cletus Sellner, *Stories of the Celtic Soul Friends: Their Meaning For Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), discusses Brigit and other Irish saints.

entific conclusion about the etiology of an individual's odd, nonconformist, perhaps even absurd or puzzling behavior, as problematic it has been in the past to develop a clear analysis of such a situation. In order to illustrate the challenges from a historical perspective, Xenia Sosnowski familiarizes us with the case of Charles the Fat (839–888; also known as Charles III), the youngest son of Louis the German and great-grandson of Charlemagne, who was the last Carolingian to rule (881–888) over a unified kingdom.

He seemingly suffered from bouts of epilepsy before he rose to the throne, but collapsed especially during a public event in 873; his contemporaries had a very hard time to comprehend the phenomenon and offered various explanations.²¹⁶ Most obvious seemed to be that the devil had taken control of him, as he admitted himself, but there also looms the large question whether the political conditions at court or individual decisions, such as Charles's previous rebellion against his father or the latter's allegedly wrong selection of his eldest son, Carloman of Bavaria, as his successor, might have played a role in all of that.

Since the late nineteenth century scholars have tried to come to terms with this sudden outbreak of insanity, which Sosnowski critically reviews and evaluates in her contribution. It could have been an epileptic attack, and perhaps even the manifestation of a hereditary disease, a reading which was the favorite one among numerous historians of medieval, and hence Carolingian history in the middle of the twentieth century, although modern medicine has partially questioned the possibility of epilepsy as being hereditary, yet without completely dismissing it.²¹⁷ Or we might interpret the extreme public outburst by this young man as a scream of protest against the father's discrimination of the youngest son, unless we consider the suggestion by a chronicler such as Hincmar of Rheims, who tried to protect the reputation of the royal house that it had been the working of the devil. Sosnowski notes, above all, that the immediate reaction to the outburst was not to resort to medical help, but instead to relics and exorcism, not because expert physicians were not present, but perhaps for political reasons.

216 Simon MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Ser. 4, 57 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also the excellent survey article online at *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_the_Fat (last accessed on Dec. 21, 2013).

217 <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/aboutepilepsy/causes/geneticfactors.cfm>; see also Steven C. Schachter, "Is Epilepsy Inherited?," http://www.epilepsy.com/101/ep101_inherited (12–15–06); M. R. Johnson and S. D. Shorvon, "Heredity in Epilepsy: Neurodevelopment, Comorbidity, and the Neurological Trait," *Epilepsy Behav* Nov. 22 (3) (2011): 421–27 (online at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21890419> (all last accessed on Dec. 23, 2013).

While previous historical research has (maybe well into the 1970s) tended to view all of the last Carolingians as genetically weak and subject to hereditary illnesses, the evidence for such a view is not really strong. Even in the case of Charles the Fat we cannot reach such a conclusion easily, if at all. Moreover, other kings and emperors throughout history had suffered from epilepsy, and yet had coped alright in the public arena. Finally, Charles's violent deposition from his throne by his nephew Arnulf shortly before his death in 887 was not legitimized with references to his illness or mental disability, but with the argument that his government was ineffectual and that he had refused to adopt Arnulf to guarantee the succession of the dynasty.

More recently, historians have suggested that Charles the Fat was one of many lay people around 900 who were conflicted by the demands of the Church to lead a pious, perhaps even clerical life and the expectations of society of their ruler/s to marry and have progeny. Possibly, Charles felt particularly guilty about his previous attempts to rebel against his father and so finally in 873 resorted to the desperate move to break out into an epileptic fit publicly as a ritual action to achieve the goal of carrying out penance, though by then rather late and hard to understand for his contemporaries, as the annalists reveal. Sosnowski aligns herself with this new branch of research, emphasizing that Charles the Fat was neither suffering from a true epileptic attack nor from a generally mental disability, but was resorting to a political maneuver of public penance, which had been rather commonly in place already among the various Visigothic kings in Spain about whom Charles must have heard and learned much during his earlier life.

The tension between him and his father had become dangerously high, and the young prince was at a loss how to save himself in that situation, unless by resorting to the Visigothic and Carolingian practice of public penance, demonstrating that his previous behavior directed against his father would have to be understood as determined by the devil who was possessing him. However, Charles did not follow the unwritten rules of doing penance for political acts, and instead resorted to an unplanned, impulsive strategy that apparently shocked his contemporaries and confounded even the bishops who composed the subsequent annals. All this apparently led to the false assumption that he was either suffering from an epileptic fit or was possessed by the devil, or both. The proper ritual of penance had been performed, for instance, by Louis the Pious in 833, to the satisfaction of all present at court, but Charles was not prepared enough and found himself in a desperate situation, which forced him to resort to a most unusual ritual which puzzled the onlookers and confused the annalists because it had not been agreed upon prior to that moment and did not conform with the standard model for such public behavior.

According to such a definition of ritual, Charles actually failed to perform a ritual and could not help but act out in a desperate move to save himself politically and from imprisonment, or even execution. In this regard Sosnowski strongly supports the perspectives developed by Gerd Althoff regarding ritualistic behavior in the political spheres of the Middle Ages, but also underscores that those behavioral norms were not always fully in place, could be undermined when the individual needs required it, or simply collapsed, as it seems to have been the case in 873.

Ultimately, the scandalous episode involving Charles allows us today to gain remarkable insight into the mental history of that time period when medical phenomena could be utilized for political purposes. Charles's behavior attracted so much attention both by his contemporaries and by modern historical research because it combined a botched ritual with a certain degree of spontaneity reflecting the young man's mental distress and panic in that public situation.²¹⁸ Political rituals mattered greatly, but they did not determine all actions. As we can conclude from Sosnowski's contribution, the issue of mental disorientation mattered greatly already then, especially when it affected members of the royal house. But we also have to be careful in our assessment of such reports about allegedly epileptic fits or the workings of the devil in an unfortunate victim since we must not ignore important political strategies behind such seemingly impulsive behavior. It might not be too far-fetched to speculate that Charles had originally hoped to carry out a standard ritual, but then, in the critical moment, simply lost it, which could have triggered a certain type of epileptic attack after all. He quickly came to his senses, however, and regained his status by means of the religious explanation pertaining to the devil's evil influence on him in that situation.

Religious art in the Middle Ages, and especially the conceptual art of Romanesque directly takes us to the world of spirituality and allows us to understand how a society or artists and their patrons perceived the universe in its material and spiritual dimensions. This generic observation is here illustrated by Rosemarie Danziger in her study on the iconographic program of the frescoes of the crypt at the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-Sur-Gartempe, ca. fifty miles east of Poitiers – a unique case of a full, linear narrative of saints' *vitae*.

These frescoes tell us the story of the martyrdom of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, but while being based on the scriptural model of the *Epistle to the Romans* by St. Ignatius,

218 For a discussion of rituality as proposed by Gerd Althoff versus spontaneity and emotionality, as proposed by Peter Dinzelbacher, see Albrecht Classen, "Roman Sentimental in the Middle Ages? Mai und Beaflo as a Literary Reflection of the Medieval History of Emotions," *Oxford German Studies* 35.2 (2006): 83–100.

tius of Antioch (d. ca. 117 C.E.), the third bishop of Antioch, a student of John the Evangelist, allegedly ordained by the apostles Peter and Paul, they shift the focus away from the Eastern early Christianity transubstantiation-Eucharist theology of martyrdom, which identified with the martyr's flesh and blood to the eschatological theology in the Latin West during the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, which identified with the reward of the saints at the End of Days. Hence, this shift marked a "softening" in the Christian view on martyrdom and made it easier for the faithful to identify with the experience expressed by the images, allowing the supplicant to undergo the desired spiritual transformation with an orientation toward the future – toward the promised reward at the End of Days.

Departing from a close study of the iconography in the crypt of Saint-Savin-Sur-Gartempe, Danziger explores the development of the hagiographic literature alongside the religious cult around relics, their history, and their location.²¹⁹ This blend of elements created a mechanism by which the worshippers were able to transcend the material limitations of their own existence and connect with the Divine, by experiencing the pictorial representation of the saints' *vitae*. Both, the written sources of the two saints' martyrdom and their pictorial version, equally underscore the ultimate purpose of providing access to the divine power through identification with the deeds and ordeals of the two chosen individuals.

Insofar as Savin and Cyprien are depicted as itinerant martyrs, guided by God and the angels on their escape from their torturers, they metaphorically imitate Christ's passage during the Passion on His way to Golgotha. The manner by which the pictorial narrative of the martyrs' life and sufferings are represented in the frescoes of this famous crypt constitutes temporal multiplicity, or a combination of meanings carried forth at the same time: the supplicants are invited to identify themselves with the saints as role models for present behavior; to grasp the meaning of the spiritual afterlife already here on Earth; to realize the promise of a glorious future of unification with Christ; and to be transposed directly back to Apostolic times. The unification with Christ, as the ultimate goal in both the Eucharist-transubstantiation thought and the eschatological thought is clearly referred to in the image showing Christ sharing the furnace ordeal with the saints, holding out His arms in protection over his protégées. The walls of the furnace

219 For a recent study of the veneration of an early medieval bishop, see Steven Vanderputten and Tjamke Snijders, "Stability and Transformation in the Cult of an Early Medieval Saint: The Case of Bishop Folcuin of Thérouanne († 855)," *Studi medievali* LIV.1 (2013): 131–51. They note, specifically, that the lay devotion transformed in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as a result of administrative changes of the abey of Saint-Bertin and because the social structure of the rural population evolved.

turn into a *mandorla*—a halo encircling Christ together with his protégées, turning the scene into a *Maiestas Domini*—Christ in Glory, the saints included.

This complexity of message in the crypt at Saint-Savin supports the notion that its iconographic program served an erudite spectator-suppliant, as the crypt was off limit for the laity and hence the parishioners – it was designated only for clergy and monks. It clearly did invite intense study and religious meditation for the learned, making possible the transition from the material existence to the spiritual dimension, holding out a promise for the servants of God at the end of time if they could fully grasp and identify with the idea of metaphorical *imitatio Christi* (typical for the Latin West) rather than the actual behavioral *Imitatio Christi* (typical for early Christianity in the East), fully unifying with Christ's flesh and blood. What we can observe then in the crypt of Saint-Savin-Sur-Gartempe proves to be a pictorial theological exegesis.

Very little known outside of Ireland, but certainly of greatest interest for our project, the medieval prosimetric *Buile Shuibhne* (The Fury of Suibhne) treats, as Feargal Ó Béarra informs us, the most curious phenomenon of a king Suibhne who is cursed by Saint Rónán Finn because of his cruel and reckless temper and then loses his mind during a battle. However, Suibhne continues to be aware about his changed mind and experiences, in a way, a schizophrenic split of his personality, until, at the end of his life, he is taken in by another saint, Mo Ling, who thus helps him to expire as a 'holy fool' redeemed at least in the eyes of God.²²⁰

On the one hand the anonymous author created a narrative strongly supported by elements borrowed from historical reality (place names, historical events), on the other s/he developed an intensively intriguing fictional work that served as a literary lens to explore the meaning of madness in the high Middle Ages. Surprisingly, *Buile Shuibhne* has survived in barely more than two manuscripts, and it had to wait until the early modern period (beginning in the early sixteenth century) to be copied once again. We might hence surmise that the content itself was hard to take for the medieval audiences, so we could argue, a little tongue-in-cheek, that here we face another case of a post-modern text from the Middle Ages.²²¹ However, it might also be possible, as Ó Béarra suggests, that

²²⁰ For an electronic edition of the Old Irish text, see <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G302018/index.html>; for an English translation online see <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T302018/index.html> (both last accessed on Feb. 21, 2014).

²²¹ I have argued along the same lines in my book-length study, *Utopie und Logos. Vier Studien zu Wolframs von Eschenbach "Titulel- Fragmenten"*. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990).

the text lived on through oral channels outside of or parallel with the literary canon, as a number of faint allusions to King Suibhne in other texts indicate, or that some of the relevant manuscripts containing this narrative might be lost – quite a common phenomenon in the Middle Ages.

Rarely has any other medieval poet offered such detailed and insightful descriptions of the case of insanity as here, apart from some legal documents, such as the ninth-century Irish *Do Drúthaib, Meraib ocus Dásachtaib*.²²² Two terms used by the poet to describe insanity, *buile* and *geilt*, are closely examined by Ó Béarra, who can demonstrate the wide range of meanings implied, which signals a considerable sensitivity regarding the complexity of this phenomenon already in the Middle Ages. Insanity was not simply a mental illness, but could also reflect a certain degree of prophetic abilities or mystical revelations, though the latter was probably not the case in *Buile Shuibhne*. Moreover, as Ó Béarra observes, *buile* also could refer to poetic ingeniousness, the *furor poeticus*, whereas the term *geilt* mostly referred to those who lost their mind out of cowardice when a battle began with loud shouting and other noise.

According to Ó Béarra the poet of *Buile Shuibhne* most deeply engaged with those two terms him/herself which then spawned a whole list of derivatives in later texts, which tells us how much the poet struggled to come to terms even linguistically with this phenomenon of mental illness that attracted and concerned him/her very much. In short, here we face another remarkable example of medieval efforts to comprehend and to discuss insanity not simply as a mental disability, but as the expression of new, often terrifying, but sometimes also highly meaningful religious experiences.

Even the linguistic evidence, with a strong use of the first person singular, underscores how much the poet has King Suibhne reflect on himself and his insanity, which conforms, perhaps not so surprisingly, with modern analysis of the language used by those suffering from depression. The King's rumination on his mental illness and his comments on the sad state of affairs he is stuck in underscore how much the author was already aware of and interested in a critical treatment of the psychological implications of madness and especially despair. However, the text does not conclude with a personal disaster; instead, Suibhne

²²² But see the example of the Carolingian King Charles the Fat, as discussed by Xenia Sosnowski in her contribution to this volume. For a discussion of a historical case of a royal person having turned insane, that is, Emperor Rudolf II (r. 1576–1611/1612), see Peter Mario Kreuter, “Wahn und Wahnsinn im 16. Jahrhundert. Nebst einem Blick auf die Behandlung psychischer Störungen bei Paracelsus,” *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40), 323–46. He also provides a good critical summary of the research on madness in the pre-modern world.

finds hope, even if no recuperation, in the arms of the Church, and thus he emerges as a medieval example of the penitent on his life-long wandering, much in the sense as outlined by the *Sermones* composed by the Irish monk Columbanus in the early seventh century.²²³ This does not exclude a possible reading of *Buile Shuibhne* as a serious critique of wrong, unethical kingship, especially because he fights against the Church at the beginning of the text, which results in the curse throwing him into insanity. Redemption is virtually not possible, but with the help of the second saintly figure the king can finally gain at least a marginal position in life as a divine fool, whose soul is welcomed by God.²²⁴

The written text all by itself matters greatly in oral cultures, such as in the Middle Ages, as Susanna Niiranen elucidates in her paper considering the great value which amulets played especially in medical therapy. She illustrates this phenomenon in light of an Occitan manuscript from the late thirteen or early fourteenth century, today housed in Trinity College, Cambridge (R.14.30). Most amulets disappeared quickly and were not preserved in libraries or at other locations because they lost their value after they had fulfilled their purpose and had achieved the desired healing. For that reason the large number of recipes included in this medical treatise (ca. 10%) serving as instructions how to create amulets matters greatly for us, since here we can grasp the extraordinary mix of medicine, religion, and magic so typical of the Middle Ages (with no value attached to this statement!). The Cambridge manuscript does not include amulets as such, but details how they can be produced and what purpose they might serve.

Most medieval vernacular medical books such as this Occitan version were produced outside of the realm of the university by practical healers (not necessarily quacks) appealing to the wider population which was looking for miracle healings and hence believed in the power of amulets and talismans. Interestingly, while the learned medical tracts tended to emphasize mostly the scholarly tradition since antiquity, popular medical books relied much more on practical advice, whether realistic or not, and often referred to specific doctors and healers to be consulted

²²³ <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/T201053.html> (last accessed on Feb. 21, 2014).

²²⁴ Alexandra Bergholm, "Academic and Neopagan Interpretations of Shamanism in *Buile Suibhne*: A Comparative Approach," *Studia Celtica Fennica* 2 – Essays in Honour of Anders Ahlqvist (2005): 30–46; eadem, Alexandra Bergholm, "Folly for Christ's Sake in Early Irish Literature: The Case of *Suibhne Geilt* Reconsidered," *Studia Celtica Fennica* 4 (2007): 7–14; eadem, "'Betwixt and Between': Theorising Liminality and Sacredness in *Buile Suibhne*," *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies*, ed. Katja Ritari and Alexandra Bergholm (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 243–63. See also the contributions to *Sakralität und Sakralisierung* (see note 166).

in unique cases. Nevertheless, Niiranen also notices considerable overlap between those medical tracts produced at the universities and those we identify as popular medical books. After all, many of the recipes in the latter genre also rely, in their ‘word magic,’ on a variety of learned sources and the biblical text.

In amulets, both the overall text and individual words, even letters, carry spiritual and material meaning, but they must be attached to the body itself and thus exert their unique healing power. Like in the case of ordinary recipes, amulets addressed specific physical problems which they were supposed to heal. Sometimes amuletic words were written even on eggs, and on apples, which then were supposed to be consumed. Sacred names were very popular in amulets, especially because of the various accounts in the New Testament of Christ healing people simply through touch or words. Often Christ’s sayings were used in amulets as well, and so common prayers.

Niiranen also notes that amulets were often employed especially for cases of mental disorder because medieval people knew virtually of no medicine or treatment for it. Sometimes Latin words entered an amulet, or made-up words, all serving clearly magical purposes. We can assume that at times the amulets were supposed to be sung, hence were to be part of a ritual and/or ceremony leading to the expected healing. The ingredients suggested in the recipes normally asked for rather common animal or plant matter, which underscores further the characteristically popular nature of this Occitan medical treatise.

Even though the Church consistently condemned amulets, we can be pretty certain that members of the lower clergy were in charge of producing them, and hence also this comprehensive compilation. Nevertheless, Niiranen suggests that many of the amuletic texts might have been written by lay women or men. To be sure, the study of both recipe books and of amulets allows us to gain extraordinary insights into late medieval popular culture how it envisioned its own ways of regaining health by spiritual, or magical, means.

Mental health, insanity, and other forms of mental disability have always been around, and so also in the Middle Ages, but each society or culture has regularly pursued different, characteristic approaches and interpretations. Eliza Buhrer explores how society understood and defined intellectual impairment in the Middle Ages and then investigates how much the legal plea regarding insanity, or rather intellectual disability, was already in place during the pre-modern era, and points out a specific case in thirteenth-century England, for instance. As some historical records clearly indicate, long before the modern era people were already reflecting considerably on the meaning of insanity and debated whether an individual could be responsible for his or her actions if s/he was out of his/her mind. Buhrer focuses much on the account by the monk, John de Mirfield (late

fourteenth century) about his master at the priory of Saint Bartholomew's Smithfield. The latter was apparently surprisingly effective in his attempts to treat even heavy head and brain injuries and understood that many of the consequences for the victim's mental capacities would endure for the rest of his life. John himself later became a major medical authority whose insights into specific aspects of how the brain works have proven to be surprisingly accurate, relatively speaking. However, neither John nor any of his contemporaries understood mental disorder and intellectual impairment the same way as we do today because their ancient Greek and Arabic sources treated all the disorders they endeavored to cure as fluid and progressive, rather than separate issues in human health. They were not blind to the medical aspects, which they could plainly witness. Nevertheless, the understanding of disease and disorder they inherited from antiquity placed intellectual impairment outside the scope of medicine due to its status as permanent unchanging condition. Thus, even as they tried hard to correlate what they witnessed in clinical practice with learned treatises with their Christian worldview intellectual impairment did not emerge as a separate medical category because the medical authors simply followed, to a large extent, the literary tradition and could thus not easily go beyond the framework it set.

Mirfield himself wrote two famous medical treatises, the *Breviarium Bartholomei* and the *Florarium Bartholomei*, but neither he nor his contemporaries could clearly recognize intellectual disability as a psychological category. Nevertheless, at closer analysis we can recognize that Mirfield and other medical experts had an impressive understanding of mental disorders, even if they could not fully explain their etiology since they systematically ignored congenital intellectual impairment and were limited by the scientific-medical concepts which they had inherited from antiquity. Since they were consistently loath to diverge from the textual tradition, they were severely limited in their effort to interpret many symptoms of mental disorder. This also implied that they systematically assumed that all mental disorders were the result of temporary ailments and could be healed, disregarding fundamental physical damages that could affect a part of or the whole brain. When they were confronted with congenital permanent disorder, they left the final treatment to the priest.

Even though Buhner identifies short passages in the works of Augustine and Isidore of Seville dealing with cases of congenital intellectual disability, she concludes that most theologians also disregarded the issues raised by people born without the capacity for reason, except when they were relevant to questions about the origin and nature of the human soul. Only Thomas Aquinas responded to the reflections of his Patristic predecessors, but not out of an interest in the medical issues; instead he probed the true nature of the human mind, soul, and spirit, and hence the questions of whether intellectually impaired individuals could be

regarded as fully human, and whether they ought to be baptized (both which he answered in the positive). Aquinas and his contemporaries considered insanity and intellectual impairment as phenomena that unfortunately existed, but they did not engage with them in a critical, i.e., medical fashion, probably, as Buhrer suggests, because they mostly followed the models concerning mental health/illness and physical sickness as already present in the Old and the New Testament, which portrayed foolishness as a reversible state when one rejects God's will.

Cases of intellectual impairment and insanity were thus regularly interpreted as the result of wrongdoings against God's will, incidental accidents that nevertheless did not alter one's essential humanity, or as caused by the devil and his evil influences. Both preaching and spiritual treatment were thus supposed to help solve madness, at least according to that theological concept. The true treatment of madness hence rested in spiritual preaching, teaching, and hence ultimately in the sinner's conversion and repentance. Insanity happened in the course of life caused by moral or ethical defects, whereas it was not present from birth according to that thinking, which dominated throughout the Middle Ages and far beyond.

However, within the legal discourse a concept of intellectual impairment had already existed in antiquity, and it continued to play a significant role in the following period, as reflected in the fundamental law book, the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, especially because lawyers have always also to deal with the legal (inheritance or property) rights of those who are mentally incapacitated. Those who were identified as idiots or mad people were not entitled to manage their own affairs or estates, as we find it, for instance, in the *Prerogativa Regis* (late thirteenth century), a summary of the monarch's customary rights and privileges, mental health, insanity, and other forms of mental disability have always been around, and so also in the Middle Ages, but each society or culture has regularly pursued different, characteristic approaches and interpretations.

Even though we mostly identify monastic orders both in the West and in the East as determined by their self-declared and vowed upon peacefulness, and complete abstinence from military or other types of aggression, we cannot simply accept this view in light of some specific phenomena which Lia B. Ross discusses in her contribution, highlighting the intricate tension between the secular and the clerical/spiritual even within the heart of the Church. It might have been a fringe aspect in some Western orders, but martial arts certainly played a role in some of them, both in the East and in the West.

Ross's most important evidence supporting her claim derives from the fifteenth-century chivalric novel *Jehan de Saintré* by Antoine de La Sale, written around 1456, precisely contemporary to Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine*, which was, however, neither autobiographical nor did it reflect more specifically

on monasticism, apart from a few fleeting references. In de La Sale's narrative we observe a fairly strong tradition of athletic activism within a monastery, as illustrated by the protagonist, the abbot, who displays his physical prowess in the form of wrestling, by which he can, at least at first, defeat his male opponent and gain the ladies' approval.²²⁵

Already in the wake of the first Crusade, launched in 1096, military operations were recognized as an alternative to monastic models of behavior, also leading to salvation, if they were directed against the enemies of the Church, hence the Muslim world. Already in 1139 the Order of the Temple (Knights Templar) was officially recognized by Pope Innocent II, and no less a luminary than Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) publicly sang a song of praise of the new combination of the military man with the cleric in the form of the crusader knight. Soon enough a whole handful of military orders emerged, assisting the crusaders far and wide, wherever Christians were in direct conflict with the Muslim powers, even though there were also outspoken critics, such as Walter Map (1140–1210) and Jean de Vitry (ca. 1160/70–1240), warning against the transgression of the clear walls separating the religious and the military-secular world from each other.²²⁶

In contrast to earlier times, the military orders did not accept children as oblates, and allowed only those to join them who could meet certain military, physical requirements in order to participate in the war activities. Consequently, the members of these military orders enjoyed a high reputation for their fighting abilities and discipline, though they did not simply carry out orders by the Church or secular lords and thus soon got into conflict with the worldly authorities. But contrary to common assumptions, these orders hardly harbored large hoards of weapon, and they were fairly small in numbers, which altogether makes it difficult to understand the references to a certain military training within an order as commented on in Antoine's *Jehan de Saintré*. However, there the abbot emphasizes that he has no military training with weapons, but knows how to wrestle.

225 Alfred Coville, *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré: Recherches complémentaires* (Paris: Droz, 1937); Emma Stojkovic Mazzariol, *L'occhio e il piede: lettura critica del Petit Jehan de Saintré di Antoine de La Sale*. Nuova biblioteca di cultura, 39 (Venice: N. Pozza, 1979); see, for a summary of the content, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_de_la_Sale (last accessed on Dec. 25, 2013), which is, however, based on the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

226 Demurger, Alain, *Les templiers: une chevalerie chrétienne au Moyen-Age*. Points, 404 (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 2008); see now the contributions to *Die geistlichen Ritterorden in Mitteleuropa: Mittelalter*, ed. Karl Borchardt. Edice Země a kultura ve střední Evropě, Sv. 20 (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2011); *La mémoire des origines dans les ordres religieux-militaires au Moyen Âge: actes des journées d'études de Göttingen (25–26 juin 2009)*, ed. Philippe Josserand. Vita regularis: Ordnungen und Deutungen religiösen Lebens im Mittelalter, 51 (Berlin: LIT, 2012).

Turning to the Russian world, Ross identifies a relatively strong effort by monks to fight for their independence against competing religious groups, especially the Lutherans, while working hard to missionize the natives especially in northern Siberia since the fifteenth century, such as those monks living in the complex on the Solovetsky archipelago (or Solovki) of the White Sea between Novgorod and Archangel. The harsh conditions required the monks to defend themselves against enemies and the challenges of nature, and in the course of time the monastery itself turned into the center of a complex settlement with a markedly military appearance, especially since the seventeenth century when the monks were aggressively fighting, alongside soldiers, against tsarist forces, trying to maintain their independence.

More dramatic examples of a militarized monasticism can be found in Buddhist China since the sixth century C.E., when a movement called Ch'an, or Zen, influenced that religion. Under the guidance of the Indian monk called Bodhidharma (ca. 448–527 C.E.), martial art was eventually introduced in Shaolin to help the monks spend their idle time more meaningfully and to build important connections between body and mind. Boxing and other physical exercises became an important practice to develop self-defense mechanisms and to strengthen the body after long periods of meditation. We might understand this phenomenon perhaps best as 'meditation in motion,' and herein we can recognize the significant parallels to the Christian Knights Templars. Both Chrétien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach in their respective grail romances, *Perceval/Parzival*, projected such a religious knightly order of fighting monks, but they might have been exceptions in medieval literature.

Martial arts continued to enjoy high respect, as a seventeenth-century report about a military unit from Shaolin helping the Chinese emperor to rid the coast of pirates confirms. However, subsequently the emperor, afraid of that independent military entity, besieged Shaolin, conquered it and burned it down – dates for this event are differing, either 1647, 1674, or 1732. Yet, it was rebuilt after his death, and the rich pictorial iconography that has survived demonstrates the great military past of that Buddhist order and its continued glory until the present. Despite the fact that the monastery was eventually destroyed by a suspicious emperor, the fact remains that China is the only place where the association of martial and spiritual practices was and remains the most explicit.

Both Buddhism and Taoism are, of course, deeply pacifistic in nature, just as Christianity, but, as Ross explains, this did not prevent the emergence of 'wu shu,' or, lately but incorrectly, 'Kung Fu' serving as a defense mechanism against the violation of serene nature. The Taoist T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan centrally aims for the establishment of perfect balance between body and mind, and thus transforms the physical training into a basis for a mental training at the same time. Within

this context Ross points out again the basic meaning of martial arts, as meditation in action. By contrast, the martial arts practiced in Tibetan monasteries went far beyond the spiritually based training, transforming those monks into true fighters who were feared far and wide and who could maintain, at least in a few major monastic units, their independence far into the twentieth century. Ross also includes, in her survey, the tradition of the Japanese *samurai*, who traced their origin back to the Heian era (794–1185 C.E.), and who often fought against each other for supremacy or for social and political control in the country. In fact, as Ross underscores, Japanese history and culture were consistently determined by the combination of military activities with Buddhist meditation, as long as the martial arts served to pursue spiritual goals, especially meditation.

In the late European Middle Ages most of the Knights Templar and similar religio-military orders disappeared from view, and secular knightly orders emerged that assumed, for their own glorification, a religious dimension associated somehow with the Grail or Christian symbols. Similarly, especially in Japan, the monastic orders were increasingly replaced by worldly knightly groups that also took on, however, a certain religious character to secure their own aura, which Ross calls “the ‘sacralization’ of the Japanese warrior. Especially forging of swords, as in the European high and late Middle Ages, turned into a religious act with great significance for the monk-knight. Altogether, Ross urges us to recognize in monasticism not only a religious movement, but also an organizational principle which facilitated the combination of the martial with the spiritual, which was certainly more strongly present in Asia than in Europe, but not unknown there either altogether. The medieval example were the Knights Templar, but the Jesuits since the sixteenth century also had strong military roots, at least in their foundation and subsequent organization.

From a comparative point of view, as Ross suggests, monasticism has always been somewhat related to the military organization in its hierarchical structure, group mentality, obedience, and social coherence, and this both in East and West. Moreover, as her trans-historical investigation reveals, the monastic ideal has consistently embraced a training of both body and mind; sometimes transforming religious practice and martial arts into actual military operations.

Much of the medieval world could not be understood if we ignored the large dimension of spirituality, whether we think of the teachings of the Church or of the idealism behind Gothic churches and cathedrals, or whether we consider the huge amount of spiritually determined literature, either secular or religious. After all, we can always recognize in one way or the other deeply anchored spiritual aspects even in most worldly texts and images, especially from the pre-modern world, as I have already illustrated in many different fashions above. Jean Jost

turns her attention to affective piety as a particularly significant aspect of spirituality, characteristic of late medieval culture, above all. As we have learned in recent years, the world of emotions as they affect human lives has often played a much greater role in the history of cultural development than even material factors; or, as we also might say, emotions and objective, material elements tend to collaborate much more closely than we can recognize at first sight in the shaping of human existence.²²⁷ Devotional literature can be, as Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas H. Bestul have argued, “a complex transaction between authors, texts, and audiences.”²²⁸ More importantly, as they emphasize, “Evidence of book use, ownership, bequest, and patronage suggests that the audience of devotional texts was very wide, extending across the social spectrum ... it is important to recognize that many texts ... appealed to aristocratic as well as popular tastes, enjoying a readership not restricted by boundaries of class.”²²⁹

As Jean E. Jost observes, by the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries a new wave of emotionality entered European culture, as is reflected both by devotional literature and art works, and also by the establishment of new monastic orders, especially the Franciscans. Late-medieval mysticism appealed to women, above all, as the numerous tracts and other types of texts composed by female writers indicate. The effects of the Black Death (1347–1351, and recurring in the follow-

227 Elke Koch, *Trauer und Identität: Inszenierungen von Emotionen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Trends in Medieval Philology, 8 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006); see also the contributions to *Emotions and Sensibilities in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Stephen Jaeger and Ingrid Kasten. Trends in Medieval Philology, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), and to *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2012); *Lachrymae: Mito e metafora del pianto nel Medioevo: atti delle III Giornate Internazionali Interdisciplinari di Studio sul Medioevo (Siena, 2–4 novembre 2006)*, ed. Francesco Mosetti Casaretto, Carla Piccone, and Roberta Ciocca. Ricerche Intermedievali, 4 (Alessandria: Ed. dell’Orso, 2011); and to *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature*, ed. Jane Tolmie and M. J. Toswell. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

228 *Cultures of Piety: Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation*, ed. Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas H. Bestul (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 4.

229 *Cultures of Piety* (see note 228), 4–5. See also Reindert L. Falkenburg, *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450–1550*; trans. from the Dutch by Sammy Herman. Oculi, 5 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Pub., 1994). Devotion was also practiced on the stage; see Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). Cf. also the seminal study by André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. and intro. by Daniel E. Bornstein; trans. Margery J. Schneider (1987; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

ing decades) also meant the development of a new degree of personal piety, as reflected, for instance, in the *The Meditationes Vitae Christi* (ca. 1340), which preceded even the great epidemic but then provided a grand literary forum to respond to the massive dying during the Plague.

Increasingly people strove to establish more personal relationships with God, with the Virgin Mary, and with individual saints and martyrs, as perhaps most poignantly expressed by the Middle English sermon *The Pricke of Conscience* (the earliest version from ca. 1350, northern England; subsequent ones produced into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries throughout England). Primarily, the author intended, as Jost alerts us, to confront the reader/listener with the disgusting features of the human body, constantly subject to decaying and rotting away, which would necessitate that the individual ignore the material existence and instead to embark on the search for one's soul and the proper behavior in spiritual terms, readying oneself for the afterlife already here on Earth. Human suffering cannot be avoided, but it serves well, as Jost elucidates in light of this sermon, to remind the individual of Christ's suffering, which altogether thus creates a form of affective piety that alleviates the physical pain almost endemic in human life.

The author graphically exposed the horrifying appearance of the interior body, both female and male, to motivate the spectator to reject material existence for the spiritual world, and hence to follow Christ.²³⁰ Consequently, the close inspection of the concrete meaning of the body's death and foulness was to serve as the catalyst for a religious conversion. Of course, this feature finds countless parallels in late-medieval art and literature, but the *Pricke of Conscience*, which experienced a tremendous popularity (there are at least 117 manuscripts in the vernacular, and Latin translations), succeeded in making this point perhaps more clearly than so many another sermons or tracts, emphasizing the corruptibility of people's physical existence in most dramatic fashion.

The realization of the pure materiality of the ephemeral body is supposed to evoke horror, but then pity, sympathy, and affective piety concerning Christ's much greater suffering, which the devout faithful is invited to embrace in light of the terrifying images projected by this sermon author. The fear of death and the possibility of being condemned to eternal suffering in hell serves to convince the

230 There are, of course, numerous precedents for this spiritual approach to the vainness and foulness of the physical body, such as in the verse narrative *Der Welt Lohn* by the Middle High German poet Konrad von Würzburg (fl. 1270–1290), *Kleinere Dichtungen Konrads von Würzburg*, ed. Edward Schröder (1924; Dublin and Zürich: Weidmann, 1970), 1–11. For a good introduction, with comments on sources and the cultural context, see Rüdiger Brandt, *Konrad von Würzburg: Kleinere epische Werke*. Klassiker-Lektüren, 2. 2., neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage (1999; Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2009), 104–09.

listener to turn away from his/her quotidian course of life and to pay full attention to the well-being of the soul, a very common theme promoted by many clerical authors throughout the late Middle Ages, and certainly most intensively in the *Pricke of Conscience*.

In light of the enormous drama produced by this sermon, resulting in deeply felt pious affinity with Christ's Passion, we may understand better why Dante, in the fifth canto of his *Divina Commedia*, collapses after he has listened to the moving story of Paolo and Francesca, not because of anger or hatred for that adulterous couple, but because of his pity and sympathy for their interminable suffering, although they were only guilty of a very human shortcoming, i.e., falling in love.

Jost recognizes here one of the first steps out of the framework of the Middle Ages toward early-modern Humanism insofar as the author, certainly still deeply steeped in medieval mentality and influenced by the conservative dogma of the Catholic Church, allows his readers to recognize the values of human emotions and affective piety, whether simply out of fear of death and hell or because of indirectly induced sympathy with the pain and suffering which Christ had to endure for humanity's sake. Ironically, as we might say, particularly because the intentions pursued in the *Pricke of Conscience* aim for a highly conservative, traditional interpretation of human life in all of its suffering and misery, at the end the author, probably involuntarily, contributed to the formation of a new cultural dimension where emotions, affective piety, and individual feelings begin to matter more than ever before.²³¹

There are strong parallels in the author's arguments to those voiced by Death in the dialogue poem *Der Ackermann* by Johannes von Tepl (ca. 1400; see above), except that beginning with chapter twenty-five, the plowman embarks on an ambitious counter-strategy to glorify the beauty of human life and physical existence as God's greatest creation. For that reason this dialogue text marked, of course, the emergence of early Renaissance thinking in the Bohemian-German context, which is not yet the case in the Middle English *Pricke of Conscience*.

Strikingly, long *avant la lettre*, medieval intellectuals already worked on issues that we would immediately recognize as psychology.²³² One such example can be found in the writings of the famous Chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson (1363–1429), who explored intensively, as Scott Taylor demonstrates,

231 Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies* (see note 11). Jost herself engages with Amsler's concepts, but she adds a particular perspective informed by her close reading of this famous sermon text.

232 Thomas G. Benedek, in his contribution to this volume, argues much along the same line concerning Petrarch and Johann Weyer.

the relationship between affective piety and knowledge, probing to what extent concrete knowledge, maybe even in a scientific context, was the precondition for spiritual visions, hence mystical love. Those suffering from a disjunction of reason and love could experience, according to Gerson, multiple problems of narcissism and obsessive-impulsive behavior. While his arguments often seem to focus on theological issues, the underlying concerns were really psychological. Taylor illustrates this first through a discussion of how Gerson approached classical-Roman poetry by Virgil, whose eloquence and esoteric ideas he greatly appreciated as material for his pastoral efforts. Gerson found much to empathize with in Virgil's *Eclogues* where the tension between rationality and the passions of erotic love finds vivid expression. The problem arises in Virgil's texts when love is commodified and the beloved does not really care about the lover. Extreme forms of love and unrequited love can lead, as Gerson perceived, to mental instability, if not schizoid depression, as we observe in his reference to Virgil's *Eighth Eclogue*.

The Chancellor employed these psychological insights for his discussion of misconceived religious passion, or delusional mystical visions, as in the case of Marguerite Porete, who was burned at the stake for her heretical views in 1310. Drawing extensively from Virgil's insights regarding the dangerous consequences of the passion of love, he alerted his readers of the dire consequences for mental health if religious visions were to overtake an individual, misleading him or her into a false affection for the Godhead based on the loss of the healthy mind. Taylor thus recognizes in Gerson a highly sophisticated psychologist of his days who warned his readers about the two extremes in human life, excessive affectivity and excessive passivity, examples of which he had found already in Virgil's *Eclogues*.

Especially in his *De mystica theologia* Gerson outlined his theory of the three cognitive and the three affective forces in the human mind. These, however, do not operate in a hierarchical system, but reflect each other and have always to be kept in mind when judging human behavior resulting from any one of those six powers. In light of these, Gerson developed a whole theory of how to achieve mystical visions that had to be sustained by cognitive insights in order to combine the *synderesis*, the natural drive toward God, with intellectual capacities making it possible to understand the object of the vision.

Taylor also discusses Gerson's recommendations regarding reason-based meditation to avoid the excesses of asceticism which could trigger, once again, forms of mental disability. Similarly, the body could easily be tempted by external stimuli, and involuntary release would hence not be sinful, such as nocturnal pollution. But extreme forms of abstinence or fasting could entail loss of rationality and the occurrence of spiritual derangement. Altogether, Gerson underscored the great need to observe moderation in all things and to allow both for affectivity and cognition since both powers complement each other and are neces-

sary for the healthy development of each other, respectively. Taylor even speaks of a “holistic theology,” which characterizes Gerson’s teaching, while we could expand on that and identify his concept as a “holistic psychology” of a medieval kind that could deeply appeal even to us today.

Similar to some of the other contributors, Thomas G. Benedek raises the critical question what insanity, madness, or mental disability might have meant in the past, but he probes specifically how two intellectual giants, Petrarch and Weyer, separated by ca. two hundred years, viewed problems of the mind, here seen through the modern lens of psychoanalysis.²³³ In the Middle Ages the most trenchant challenges to any common concept about mental health or rationality originated from many different mystics, some of whom were actually burned at the stake for their heretical views, or their allegedly deliberate association with the devil, such as Marguerite Porete (d. 1310) and Joan of Arc (d. 1431; Jeanne d’Arc). In the late Middle Ages, or rather in the early modern age, the Church, and hence the Inquisition, increasingly turned toward the hysterically perceived phenomenon of witches and hence the problem of the Church with witches, and that quickly translated into a veritable witch craze over the next hundreds of years.

Scholarship has dealt with this phenomenon already many times, but we also need to keep in mind what some individuals had to say about mental illness, trying to defend the innocent victims against the religious charges of having committed witchcraft. Benedek focuses on two of them, both famous writers, comparing their teachings and viewpoints, the first being the Italian Renaissance poet Petrarch (1304–1374), the other the German or Dutch medical doctor Johann Weyer (1515–1583), who is famous until today for his major treatise *De praestigiis Daemonum* in which he formulated highly critical viewpoints about the etiology of so-called witchcraft.²³⁴

233 We also know of cases when victims of the medieval Inquisition tried to save themselves by pretending lunacy, although this was not an effective means to escape from the horrible death of burning alive at the stake. See James Given, “Learning by Doing: Coping with Inquisitors in Medieval Languedoc,” *Heresy and the Making of European Culture: Medieval and Modern Perspectives*, ed. Andrew P. Roach and James R. Simpson (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 335–54; here 359–61.

234 Michaela Valente, *Johann Wier: agli albori della critica razionale dell’occulto e del demoniaco nell’Europa del Cinquecento*. Studi e testi per la storia religiosa del Cinquecento, 12 (Florence: Olschki, 2003); Eike Pies, *Johann Weyer (1515–1588): Leibarzt Herzogs Wilhelm des Reichen von Jülich-Kleve-Berg und mutiger Gegner des Hexenwahns* (Sprockhövel: Familienstiftung Eike Pies, 2011).

Benedek argues, however, that Petrarch's treatise *De remediis utriusquae fortune* (1366) stands out considerably over Weyer's *De praestigiis Daemonum* because the author soundly rejected both astrology and alchemy and pursued a highly rationalistic, if not philosophical approach in dealing with mental issues. Closely following Cicero, Petrarch urged his readers above all to pursue a life of virtues and to control one's emotions. To enjoy mental health and to realize virtues, one has to embrace wisdom, temperance, and justice, and the truly virtuous person would understand the need not separate the body from the mind in all ruminations about human life. Once all this has been realized, the individual would be empowered to fend off fear and hence to gain a stoic attitude, the healthiest of all possible conditions in human life. Feelings of sadness and misery could bring about depression, or hypochondria. Sleep, according to Petrarch, would be almost a panacea, while he ridicules dreams or nightmares as pure fantasy and imagination. In light of these aspects, it comes as no surprise that Petrarch argued very little in favor of medical doctors; instead he suggested a form of self-help in case of depression or melancholy by way of amending one's thoughts and behavior in terms of virtues. In other words, he pursued an ethical and psychological approach to mental disability, arguing for paying close attention to the own inner strength in medical cases and for building in this way a foundation in one's mind with which to hold in check irrational, emotional attacks.

There is no reference to the devil or to demons in any of Petrarch's discussions of people's physical and spiritual health or sickness, although the Church had preached much along those lines since the time of the Church Father St. Augustine, constantly warning against the workings of those nefarious forces. However, Petrarch also resorted to the Galenic concept of the four humors, especially with respect to the influence of the various fluids on the well-being of the body. He elaborated on this perspective particularly with respect to love and sexuality, trying, nevertheless, still to develop a rational understanding of mental problems that might occur under a variety of circumstances. Not surprisingly, Petrarch developed in that context an entire theory of proper and spiritually sound marriage based on love. Moreover he posited that the individual should try to anticipate as many developments in his or her life in order to be better prepared for them. This also includes the acceptance that the marriage partner could die before oneself. Suicidal tendencies, on the other hand, were hence a form of sickness of the mind and could be combated by means of promoting a virtuous lifestyle.

Benedek recognizes here an early but very insightful form of psychotherapy insofar as Petrarch applied ethical approaches to mental disturbances, although in the course of his investigations he also advised against love since it would weaken men and bring the worst out of them, suffering from a fire of the mind. In

other words, sensuality is, for Petrarch, the result of profound emotional confusion and can be the cause of losing one's virtuosity, hence one's mind.

Weyer, on the other hand, while still arguing against sexuality and women as threats to a man's mental health, claimed that the cause for men's impotence, for instance, would be demons, and not old women, for instance, according to his teachings about alleged witchcraft. Nevertheless, in explicit opposition to the famous *Malleus maleficarum* composed mostly by Heinrich Kramer (Henricus Institoris), only allegedly also by Jakob Sprenger, published in Speyer, Germany, in 1486,²³⁵ Weyer condemned the savagery of the Inquisition's hunt of poor women accused of witchcraft, and strongly suggested that the vast majority of victims were old women (over fifty years of age), which modern research has confirmed through extensive statistical research. He emphasized that those miserable individuals were mostly suffering from mental disabilities, as we would call it today. Petrarch had outlined ways to stave off senility – of course, primarily among men – whereas Weyer identified it as the etiology of alleged witchcraft, insofar as those women were feeble of mind due to their old age and hence susceptible to the devil's influence. Melancholy emerges here as one of the major causes, but instead of resorting to a religious explanation, Weyer offered an analysis of what we would call 'paranoid schizophrenia' or 'manic psychosis.' He also recognized the fairly heavy use of poisons extracted from a variety of herbs employed by women trying to rid themselves of their husbands, which again had nothing to do with witchcraft.

By contrast, as Benedek observes, Petrarch was not interested in herbs or toxins and instead focused on ethical and philosophical reflections. He warned of poisonous plants and advised people to embrace voluntary poverty to avoid gout or to prevent people's envy of one's happiness or riches. Nevertheless, both writers held a rather negative view of medical doctors, with Petrarch relying on the self-healing forces in the human individual, and with Weyer gravely suspecting many ignorant doctors (including Paracelsus and his followers) of falsely associating illnesses with the workings of the devil, which was, however, far from truth.

Weyer was a practicing medical doctor and knew what he was talking about in his medical descriptions, while Petrarch relied on ancient Roman philosophy

²³⁵ Sprenger was, as far as we can tell today, even an opponent of the witch hunt and rejected Kramer's theses; however, the former utilized his name to strengthen the authority of his treatise. For a good summary, and an updated bibliography, see the excellent article in *Wikipedia*, online at: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malleus_maleficarum (last accessed on Dec. 20, 2013). Major links to digitized incunabula and prints are listed there as well.

and writing in his discussion of medical or psychological problems in people. Nevertheless, as Benedek suggests, because of his complete rejection of demonology and his reliance on natural etiology and ethical concepts he was actually much closer to our modern diagnostics of medical or psychological issues than Weyer, especially with regard to the attitude toward death, which the individual simply ought to accept as a fact of life, and so should not fear, as Weyer later formulated.

Weyer experienced considerable recognition, but his understanding of psychological conditions leading to mental disabilities, including melancholy and depression, as we would call those phenomena today, was still determined by his concepts of demonology. Petrarch, by contrast, pursued a more 'advanced' perspective regarding mental disorders, insisting primarily on ethical issues underlying their etiology. Benedek argues, hence, that with regard to the critical examination of madness, insanity, or the loss of the rational mind history cannot be perceived as necessarily progressive since Petrarch was, in some ways, well ahead of Weyer. Nevertheless, both can be credited for their major contributions to the rational analysis of mental health, mental disability, and related issues.

We tend to forget that medieval medical writers were not only concerned with their patients' physical well-being, but that they were also deeply interested in giving advice as to the best possible life-style in order to preserve health, that is, as to their eating habits and especially mental health. David Tomíček illustrates this through a close reading of the medical tracts by various late medieval Bohemian/Czech writers, such as by Albich (Albicus) of Uničov, originally university professor, but then court physician for the German Emperor Sigismund (1368–1437) since the latter had assumed the throne in 1419. According to Albich, the good physician makes sure that his patient pays attention not only to material aspects, but also to psychological issues. This was, of course, not a radical innovation, but a solid continuation of a tradition going back to Greek antiquity (Galen), which then in the high Middle Ages had experienced a tremendous revival through intellectuals such as Avicenna (980–1037), Hugo of St. Victor (ca. 1096–1141), and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

Albich explored very similar criteria in his medical advices, emphasizing, for example, similar to his contemporary colleagues, the need for every individual to experience joy and happiness and to feel cheerful about one's own appearance and lifestyle. This made possible, in a way, the close connection between macro- and microcosm, which subsequently also allowed the maintenance of physical health by means of mental health (body and mind/spirit). Albich went so far as to promote heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages as a means to drive away

depression and melancholy, but we probably would have to understand that as an ironic swipe against some of his contemporary medical authors warning their readers about the dangers of drunkenness. More importantly, he recommended to abstain from anger, which, under the worst circumstances, could even lead to insanity. Aside from those aspects, Albich also reflected on the phenomenon of love sickness, *amor heroes*, suggesting, as a helpful treatment, many travels, frequent baths, and sexual contacts with other women.

One of the major concerns for Albich and many other medical writers was melancholy, a characteristic topic of public discourse in the late Middle Ages and the early modern age. Both Albich and his numerous colleagues throughout the next centuries emphasized in this context the great need to pursue cheerful activities and to make a good effort at winning joy in one's heart since a healthy mindset would be the basis for physical health as well. As Tomíček alerts us through his careful reading of the various Bohemian/Czech medical tracts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the psychological approach to mental health then apparently did not differ essentially from the one modern medical-mental research also recommends. This, in turn, reminds us, once again, to keep in mind that there are good reasons even for us today to pay attention, once again, to insights regarding mental health as developed in the pre-modern, and even ancient world.

Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, gems and special kinds of stones were regarded as endowed with particular power connected with astrology. Lithotherapy was thus a major part of the medical sciences. Wolfram von Eschenbach includes, for instance, a short discussion of the lapidary teachings in his grail romance *Parzival* (ca. 1205, books 790–92).²³⁶ When Parzival and his half-brother Feirefiz arrive at the grail castle Munsalvæsche, they observe an enormous display of valuable gems, all serving to heal the wounded and poisoned Grail King Anfortas, some helping the individual to gain happiness, others providing, in their own way, physical health.²³⁷ The most influential medieval lapidary was the one composed by Marbod of Rennes, the *Liber de lapidibus seu de gemmis* (twelfth century), which became, next to Plinius the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* (ca. 77–79 C.E.), a fundamental source for all the major encyclopdia and medical authors in the following centuries, such as those by Hildegard of Bingen,

236 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival: Studienausgabe*. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann, Übersetzung von Peter Knecht, Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schiroke (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998).

237 Claude Lecouteux, *A Lapidary of Sacred Stones: Their Magical and Medicinal Powers Based on the Earliest Sources*, trans. Jon E. Graham (2011; Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2012).

Arnoldus Saxus, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Thomas of Cantimpré, Vincent of Beauvais, and Konrad of Megenberg.²³⁸

In her contribution to this volume, Liliana Leopardi examines the famous Renaissance treatise on lithotherapy, Camillo Leonardi's *Speculum Lapidum* (printed in 1502 and many times thereafter; in English translation reprinted at least until 1750), which contains descriptions of the properties of two hundred and fifty precious and semi-precious stones, along with their occult virtues, as well as a discussion of ninety-two magical engraved images. While as his ideas were deeply grounded in medieval concepts of the metaphysical properties of stones and gems, Leonardi was certainly much influenced by Marsilio Ficino's (1433–1491) neoplatonic teachings concerning the physical *medicus* as *magus*. His lithotherapy poignantly reflects the curious mix of medical teachings borrowed from his medieval predecessors and early modern understandings of the human body in medical terms as developed in the sixteenth century. Significantly, the firm belief in the close correlation of macrocosm and microcosm, and hence in the workings of astrology continued to be major factors in the early modern age (see Paracelsus, for instance).

Leonardi's *Speculum Lapidum* represents a fascinating example of this curious but highly influential concept of embracing both dimensions at the same time, serving as the critical approach to the true healing of human sicknesses by means of metaphysical strategies. However, virtually the greatest concerns were mental disabilities, such as melancholy, insanity, possession by the devil, and the like, for which many gems were listed as having healing power.

Nevertheless, confusion seems to rule in Leonardi's tract at first because individual gems are said to have certain effects for specific illnesses, and then also for others, which makes the entire teachings of lapidary science a matter of speculation. But for Leonardi in the paradigm of macrocosm-microcosm, where the human soul operated as the critical intermediary, a multitude of constellations were possible, and the medical *magus* was supposed to figure out how spiritual healing could be achieved by means of astrology and lithotherapy. Both Ficino and Leopardi faced difficulties, however, because their teachings easily bordered on heresy, as the Church saw it, especially with respect to their understanding of images that one could perceive in stones, which thus could be utilized as amulets. or could even be created.²³⁹ After all, they had a clear sense of a close interaction

²³⁸ See Haage and Wegner, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes* (see note 163), 216–17. For a good survey, see the article in *Wikipedia*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lapidary_%28text%29 (last accessed on Dec. 5, 2013).

²³⁹ See also the contribution to this volume by Susanna Niiranen.

between objects such as gems and the perceiving subject, meaning that the visual sense worked two ways, responding to and creating images.

From this resulted the strong conviction, as formulated especially by Leonardi, that wearing a gem on a ring, for instance, or directly on the affected body part, could have a healing effect. Images on the stones could have a direct relation to the zodiac system, but if not they still worked via their astral power because they all had a generative function. Vision transmitted, in other words, energy, and those pursuing lapidary sciences made use of that force for practical healing strategies. The viewer could determine whether a gem was authentic or a fake through the observation of affection which the inspection of that gem created in him/her.

Finally, Leopardi illustrates Leonardi's neoplatonic concept of the power of vision as realized through gems and other stones in light of a medical report from as late as 1747, according to which an old man suffering from a bad case of testicular tumor experienced a miraculous healing by means of placing the image of the saintly nun Maria Rosa Giannini, who had died only six years earlier, right next to the affected area. Whether we can believe that account about the effectiveness of gems (and images) as part of a lithotherapy, cannot be confirmed here. But Leopardi demonstrates how much pre-modern medicine, especially in the world of the Italian Renaissance, relied heavily on a combination of 'magic' and religion, of lapidary science and the power of vision.

European medicine had experienced a tremendous revolution and innovation since the twelfth century through the influx of ancient knowledge via Arabic and Hebrew translations (especially at Salerno and Toledo) of critical texts by learned authorities such as Galen and Avicenna. But the changes since then were less extensive, because no major discoveries were made again until the late sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Galen's teachings, focused on humoral theory, continued to dominate well into the early modern age. Only with the appearance of the famous or notorious medical doctor and writer Paracelsus (1493–1541) many new insights were formulated, especially because he rejected Galen's humoral concept, though the global teaching of medicine did not profit from them for a long time. Significantly, this was also the time when Humanists began to compose didactic poems on medicine, such as Girolamo Fracastoro (ca. 1478–1553) with his poem on syphilis, "Syphilis sive de morbo Gallico."²⁴⁰

240 Reinhold Gleis, "Krankheit dichten: Kranker Mensch und kranke Natur im lateinischen Lehrgedicht," *Krankheit schreiben: Aufzeichnungsverfahren in Medizin und Literatur*, ed. Yvonne Wübben and Carsten Zelle (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 325–47; here 336–47. For more background,

Andrew Weeks here discusses what Paracelsus calls the invisible diseases, mostly mental disorders, and how he offered innovative perspectives by combining empiricism with theology in order to blaze a new path for medicine at large. Weeks suggests the term “cosmic reformation” to describe Paracelsus’s attempts to correlate physical problems with spiritual ones, and to resort to faith as a major etiological instrument. Healing recognized imagination and suggestion. Illness had to be analyzed in theological terms. His *Invisible Diseases* was written in 1531, a year of high drama and global crisis both on the religious stage (the Reformation) and the political one (the conflicts within the Empire and the Swiss Confederation). It was also a year of personal crisis for Paracelsus who sought new avenues in medical treatment, freed from the humoral doctrine. He rejected the classical authorities and looked for novel insights into nature, placing particular emphasis on the spiritual dimension supporting all life. Paracelsus predicated his medical discourse on the concept of macrocosm and microcosm – see already Hildegard of Bingen (discussed above) – arguing for medical healing methods which relied as much on the invisible, divine forces as on the visible ones. For Paracelsus, as for many precursors and successors, Christ was the ultimate medical doctor to whom the sick had to turn for help.²⁴¹ This made the physician a theologian as well. Paracelsus also composed many theological treatises.

Weeks thus alerts us in a refreshing fashion to the problematic nature of the two large terms characterizing the entire epoch, the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance. With respect to both, Paracelsus can only be located somewhere in a limbo between those major movements. He combined medical research and physical treatments with spiritual enlightenment for the patient. He agreed with Luther in rejecting the classical authorities (Aristotle, Galen, Avicenna) but went further by seeking to recapture truths of nature in an unadulterated reading of Genesis and by redefining how a true medical doctor should understand his (her) patients.

Thomas Willard continues with a more detailed discussion of how Paracelsus approached mental (and other) diseases, obviously a great concern in the medical profession, especially since the sixteenth century or so. This new focus roughly

including medical-scientific explanations, see <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syphilis>. The English version offers slightly different information, and also different illustrations and bibliography, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syphilis#History> (both last accessed on Jan. 2, 2014).

241 See the contributions to *Paracelsus im Kontext der Wissenschaften seiner Zeit: Kultur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Annäherungen*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); see also Matthias Vollmer, “Sünde – Krankheit – ‘väterliche Züchtigung’” (see note 59), 261–86. Cf. G. Fichtner, “Christus medicus,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* vol. 2.9 (Munich and Zürich: Artemis, 1983), col. 1942.

coincided with a new angle on astrology, hence in the influence of astral powers on human beings, a research field promoted by individuals such as Trithemius, Abbot of Sponheim (1462–1516), Henricus Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), and Paracelsus (1493–1541). The critical question for them all was how to understand the workings of the mind, that is, what faculties it consists of and how they interact with each other in relationship to the body. They also probed to what extent there was free will, an issue which Boëthius (d. 525) had already raised in his famous *De consolacione philosophiae* and which has continued to challenge us until today.

Paracelsus was particularly interested in the faculty of the soul which creates links between the material and the spiritual dimension. In explicit contrast to common thinking at his time, he refused to accept the workings of the devil in cases of what he identified, correctly, as we would say today, mental disorder or mental disability. Instead, as Willard points out, for Paracelsus the problem rested with the failings of some of the spirits, when they were affected by the moon, or by other physical factors, which could lead to insanity. Even if an individual then might be drawn to the devil in his/her imagination, the etiology of insanity was often natural for him. The approach of Paracelsus, which treats bodily ailments as caused by problems of the soul or vital spirits, makes him, as Willard suggests, an early predecessor of twentieth-century teachings of psychosomatic medicine.

Insofar as Paracelsus, much in line with the Pauline teachings, believed in the existence of various spiritual entities in human life, he also embraced the notion that the sidereal body, for instance, was influenced by the stars (astrology). By the same token, a wise person in control of his or her spiritual body would be able to master the heavens by means of his/her faith. In terms of health, this means that all illnesses originally comes from the stars, and the true medical doctor thus would be required to investigate first of all the relationship between the patient's soul and the specific star configuration, hence to study as closely as possible the human imagination. Consequently, for Paracelsus mental disorder erupted when astral forces exerted distorted influence on the physical body, or rather the animal spirit. Accordingly, madness could result from a mother's (at times also a father's) imagination during the early stages of growth of her fetus. Healthy children are born from parents who imagine themselves to be good parents, while the opposite case, with negative thoughts about the child, would lead to an unhealthy, later maybe insane person because the parent's reason is thus obscured.

Paracelsus vehemently attacked contemporary medical doctors for their 'erroneous' concepts grounded in Galenic humoral theory and rejected most of their teachings based on texts borrowed from antiquity, insisting instead on the need to pay attention only to Nature and then to God, the true healer of all sicknesses. As much as he thus operated from a theological perspective, so he also

relied on the close study of natural conditions which could provide the answers to human sickness, including mental disability.

Ultimately, Paracelsus perceived the universe in the binary of macro- and microcosm, and the adept physician ('*medicus adeptus*') was the one who could recognize the impact of the divine forces on human life, whether we call him thus a 'magician' or a theologically inspired medical doctor. Paracelsus created a kind of an "anatomy of the world" in which, as he perceived it, the spirit and the body interact closely with each other. The true sage would understand both aspects and could thus promise to be the best possible healer if s/he accepts the proposition that some diseases have a spiritual origin.

Contrary to previous ideas about how the pre-modern world might have treated the insane and madness at large, the early modern public was quite interested in this phenomenon since it was treated not only from a medical and religious perspective, but also from the mythic perspective transmitted in humanist works. As Marilyn L. Sandidge explores in her contribution, the Elizabethan and Jacobean writer and composer Thomas Campion even staged insanity in his piece of court entertainment *The Lords' Masque* composed for the wedding of Elizabeth, daughter of King James I, with Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, in 1613. Theater play at the early modern courts was of central importance, both for simple entertainment and for the self-representation of the ruling class. The vain and profligate monarch James Stuart required performance more than ever before, and this also in London, as on the entire European stage, for his own self-aggrandizement. However, as Sandidge argues, behind the formal masques we can also recognize unbridled passions and uncontrollable behavior, staged or displayed as madness.

The Jacobean theater was very much concerned with manifestations of madness, but Campion's court entertainment is the only court masque in which mad figures parade before the royal family and its noble guests. Later, several plays written for the London stage such as John Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* (first published in 1629) and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612–1613) displayed masque-like scenes reminiscent of Campion's in which mad fellows jump about in sinister circumstances. These antimasques, commissioned to be a part of the court entertainment and then incorporated into other dramatic works of the time, deal with the danger of the loss of civilization, such as illustrated.²⁴²

²⁴² Manfred Brauneck, *Die Welt als Bühne: Geschichte des europäischen Theaters*. Vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1993), 684–88; Anja Müller-Wood, *The Theatre of Civilized Excess: New Perspectives on Jacobean Tragedy*. Costerus, New Series, 169 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007); Barbara Wooding, *John Lowin and the English Theatre, 1603–1647: Acting and Cultural*

The masque writers were even commissioned to include antimasques in their pieces of court entertainment and hence to deal with the danger of the loss of civilization, such as illustrated in Ben Johnson's *The Masque of Queens* from 1609. The court masque, as did the wider world of Jacobean theater, thus emerged as an important experimental space for social criticism top down. The presentation of the chaotic underworld of madness allowed the masque composer as well as the playwright to demonstrate the thin veneer of society and the importance of the royal court to control the forces from wild nature, including the insane individuals within its midst. The role of Orpheus in Campion's masque underscores how much the antimasque served to introduce the concept of the poetic fury, the very creative moment of all arts, which suddenly relativizes the traditional idea of insanity completely. The figure of Jove served as a representative of King James, who was identified as the master over life and death, and hence also as the one who could control madness by means of music.

Despite all efforts to associate the insane with art or music, Campion and others suggested, through their antimasques, that the King should cleanse his court from unwanted and dangerous, if not deranged individuals and hence to reestablish his authority altogether. At the same time, as Sandidge notes, the antimasques introduced a variety of erotic elements, and did not shy away from portraying homoerotic relationships connecting King James with some of his courtiers. Characteristically, we can find the mad lover, the self lover, the melancholic (generally identified with Platonic notion of the genius in the wake of Ficino's thinking), the school-man, i.e., the person whose excessive studying has turned his mind to madness, and the excessively gullible and greedy person, or usurer. The latter was particularly apt at voicing criticism of the complete out-of-control spending under the king because he accepted enormous interest rates, basically comparable to the 'pay-day-lenders' of our day and age. The court wasted money at a speed that bordered on the insane, so the theater play made possible the sarcastic criticism of this new form of madness. The antimasque, predicated on the discourse of madness, uncovered, as the term itself actually implies, the absurdity of the enormous waste by the crown and warns the audience about the dangers of the government's financial collapse to the detriment of society at large. Ironically, James himself had alerted his own readers about the devastating consequences of squandering the state income in his *Basilikon Doran*,²⁴³ which he had written in 1599 as King of Scotland. However, later in his own life as King James I he seems

Politics on the Jacobean and Caroline Stage. Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, [2013]).

243 Wilhelm Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johannis von Salisbury bis*

to have fallen prey to his madness and the absurdities of courtly existence, acting very much in contradiction to all the precepts laid out in that treatise.

Insanity has always represented a very difficult phenomenon, perhaps because its distinct etiology is hard to determine and because it often seems rather challenging to distinguish between the insane and the genius. As a historical case study, Bo Andersson introduces the Swedish eschatologist Eva Margaretha Frölich (d. 1692) who was deeply convinced that the Swedish King Charles XI was supposed to rule over all of Christianity. While her family was of Austrian extraction, she lived the first part of her life in Riga, the second-ranked economic center in the Swedish kingdom. However, in order to disseminate her vision, she went to Stockholm, was received by the king in audience, delivered her apocalyptic message, yet without achieving her goal of convincing the king of his divinely ordained role in the future. Instead of being executed, she was put under house arrest, and was later exiled. She subsequently traveled to Dresden and Amsterdam, and eventually returned to Sweden in 1692, where she died, before she could be tried once more and executed. However, most of her books that she had wanted to deliver to the people were burned, obviously because the authorities considered them dangerous.

Andersson uses her texts, as they have survived, as an intriguing case of religious-political apocalyptic thinking in the Swedish context, where the decline in political and military affairs had reached a dangerous level for the state, being dependent on the help of its Catholic (!) ally France, and with the king suffering from low respect internationally. While King Gustavus Adolphus still had enjoyed an almost mythical admiration for his European leadership role during the 1630s (Thirty Years' War), by the 1680s the situation had changed radically, especially for Sweden, so depressing realism had set in. Concomitantly, most European politicians and diplomats operated with the understanding that hegemony was no longer possible even as an ideological dream.

However, Eva Margaretha Frölich, like some of her contemporaries, was very much opposed to such a pragmatic view, and hence developed her apocalyptic alternative, even though this made the authorities regard her as an insane person. She assumed that only a hegemonic state with a strong internally homogenous structure would lead out of the doldrums of her time and guarantee an everlasting peace because all internecine strife would be overcome and all external foes would have submitted under the glory of the Swedish king, including all former

zum *Basilikon Doron König Jakobs 1.* (1937; Walluf bei Wiesbaden: Sändig, 1973); see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilikon_Doron (last accessed on Nov. 12, 2013)

enemies, unless those, such as the Turks and the Russians, were finally struck by a heavenly fire and consumed.

Although a modern observer would conclude that Eva Margaretha Frölich was not of a healthy mind, Andersson's discussion of her works brings to light that her various writings in fact pursued a political concept of a strongly idealistic nature. Granted, this stood much in contrast to the realities of her time, but the difference between her vision and those of other writers who projected utopias was not that remarkable. Her religious perceptions led her to believe that she had divine authority to teach the Swedish king how to assume hegemonic power in order to establish universal happiness. Tragically for her, none of her ideas had any chance to develop further, but we can recognize, as Andersson emphasizes, still a certain ideological ideal that emerged in direct reaction to the political and military situation of her time. Even the case of an insane person can be used, as we observe here, as a means to comprehend larger political concerns and discontent with the practical realities, such as in late seventeenth-century Sweden. We also recognize through the historical lens how problematic all efforts might be to define madness or insanity, since much depends on the larger framework of commonly accepted epistemological criteria.²⁴⁴

Madness proves to be a matter of perspectives, even though most people would claim that they know what it is when they see it; comparable to the same approach to the unrelated topic of 'obscenity.'²⁴⁵ Epistemologically speaking, insanity is a very slippery term and easily escapes our rational approach. But so is spirituality, or even religion.

Jakob Böhme might well have been one of the most intriguing figures connecting the late Middle Ages with the early modern world, drawing much inspiration from medieval mystics and exerting, in turn, much influence on his posterity,

244 See Andreas Brenner, "Mystiker und Wahnsinnige" (see note 86). See also Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, c1987); H. C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); cf. also the contributions to *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's Histoire de la folie*, ed. Arthur Still and Irving Velody (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). The benchmark of all research on madness continues to be, of course, Michel Foucault's *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (1961; London and New York: Routledge, 2006). For critical comments about Foucault's concept, see Allison Coudert's article in the present volume.

245 This phrase was famously coined by the United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart to describe his threshold test for obscenity in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964); see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_know_it_when_I_see_it (last accessed on Nov. 6, 2013).

especially the Romantics in the early nineteenth century.²⁴⁶ In his masterpiece, *Aurora* (first conceived in 1600, but written out in 1612, though never completed), he raises the critical question of how humans can acquire knowledge in the true sense of the word, dismissing, most significantly, the standard answers provided by learned, academics.²⁴⁷ For him, as Florian Westhagen and Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher argue in their contribution to this volume, melancholy was the principle catalyst to overcome the deception of traditional knowledge and to enter into a new world where full, divinely determined knowledge was available.²⁴⁸

As a starting point, the two authors note that Böhme strongly emphasized his own lack of education, deftly playing with the old rhetorical device of humility, or the modesty topos, since he hoped to signal clearly enough that his own inspiration and revelation derived from God Himself. For him, the scholars and other university trained teachers were blind to the true knowledge contained in nature. By contrast, as Böhme argued, this knowledge could only be granted epistemologically to the individual who was mystically readied for a new clairvoyance through a divine revelation, receiving it in a sensual experience, such as in Böhme's own case as recorded in his *Aurora*. But it is not nature by itself that provides understanding, because ultimately it can only be God, who manifests Himself in nature and transforms nature thus into a catalyst for the supernatural experience ("übersinnliche Erfahrung").

Even the study of nature would not suffice, since only the quest for God could achieve the final goal, if God graced the individual with that specific insight. In

246 *Offenbarung und Episteme: zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt. Frühe Neuzeit, 173 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); see also, from a philosophical-historical perspective, the contributions to *Die Realität des Inneren: der Einfluß der deutschen Mystik auf die deutsche Philosophie*, ed. Gerhard Stamer. Philosophie & Repräsentation, 8 (Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2001); Cecilia Muratori, "Misticismo come speculazione: Hegel interprete di Böhme = Der erste deutsche Philosoph: Hegels Interpretation des spekulativen Mystizismus Jakob Böhmes," Ph.D. diss. Jena 2009; still of great value, Walter Feilchenfeld, *Der Einfluss Jacob Böhmes auf Novalis*. Germanische Studien, 22 (Berlin: Ebering, 1922). See also Edwin Lüer, *Aurum und Aurora: Ludwig Tiecks "Runenberg" und Jakob Böhme*. Beiträge zur neueren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1997).

247 Albrecht Classen, "Jacob Böhme," *German Writers of the Baroque, 1580–1720*, ed. James Hardin. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 164 (Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1996), 64–73.

248 For the history of melancholy, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn und Melancholie: Studien zur Geschichte der Naturphilosophie und Medizin, der Religion und der Kunst*, trans. Christa Buschendorf. Suhrkamp- Taschenbuch Wissenschaft: Stw, 1010 (1964; Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992).

this regard, Böhme emerges as a unique continuator of medieval mysticism, but he directed his inquiries and ruminations toward the fundamental question of knowledge and understanding toward the divine as the ultimate source of everything created here on earth.

As Westhagen and Karnitscher recognize, Böhme turns to the phenomenon of melancholy as the springboard for the universal, mystically determined revelation. First, the individual becomes melancholy because of the realization that the human being is truly insignificant both in face of this global nature and also in face of God's infinitude. Second, melancholy sets in as well because of Böhme's insight into the equal presence of good and evil in this world. At the end, however, the individual can overcome this dilemma by turning to nature, and hence to God. Melancholy, in other words, deconstructs all hope to find oneself in this world and to acquire full knowledge through traditional, rational or intellectual channels. This then allows, or rather forces the individual to search for new avenues for epistemological investigations.

Böhme's frustration with the Manichean condition of human existence, being both black and white in equal measure, essentially helped him to reach out for deeper insight and thus paved his way toward a spiritually conditioned form of epistemology supported by God's help in that process. Böhme looked for a strategy to understand this world spiritually, and at first failed in face of these two types of dilemmas. Out of his deep disappointment (melancholy) then resulted a reorientation in his search, taking him to nature, and from there to God, who thus becomes the individual's guiding rod in all efforts of human comprehension. The microcosmic entity no longer despairs in face of the macrocosmic universe and recognizes, through mystical revelations, how much God actually comes to the rescue and sheds light on the universe even for the humble human creatures in this world.

Only once the individual has recognized God and has merged with Him in a mystical experience, can true knowledge be acquired. In sum, Westhagen and Karnitscher rightly underscore the critical importance of melancholy for Böhme's concept of epistemology, which also explains the extensive impact which he later had on the Romantics and others. His 'mysticism' rests, in clear contrast to his medieval predecessors, on an active search for God and knowledge, and it is intriguingly embedded in nature. We can thus identify Böhme's *Aurora* as a milestone in the ever ongoing quest for a merger of the mental-spiritual with the material-learned, by way of turning toward God and seeking unification with Him, which leads to the acquisition of full knowledge in the deepest sense of the word.

Both in the past and today we have always faced the serious problems of how to identify what we mean with sanity or madness. When an individual suddenly

turns away from her/his usual mode of behavior, or radically changes his/her attitude, outlook, set of ideals, etc., we might regard this as loss of the sane mind, or as the result of an epiphany. Would we consider medieval mystics as such, or view them as insane individuals? Was St. Francis of Assisi a saint or a lunatic? Do we have to admire Hildegard of Bingen as an outstanding visionary or should we lament her as a person who might have suffered from mental disabilities?

We have observed this epistemological challenge already various times above, and Martha Moffitt Peacock takes us one step further in the critical examination of such cases by examining the situation with the Dutch intellectual, Anna Maria Van Schurman (1607–1678). Throughout her early and young adult life she received highest praise for her enormous learning and philological skills, being highly competent in the major standard European and also in an array of Asian languages. Van Schurman also excelled in a variety of other disciplines, including mathematics and medicine. She was further propelled to fame because of her writings in which she insisted on women's equality with men in rational thought and intellectual abilities.

As Peacock underscores, Van Schurman became an iconic figure for all of seventeenth-century Dutch culture, widely admired and publicly praised in the public media, and was even visually presented in her portraits. Simultaneously, she gained much respect for her artistic skills and was even accepted into the Utrecht artists' guild. In many respects, she successfully made her way into male society, both as an artist and as a scientist, apart from her philological abilities, gaining much fame as an extraordinary female who could easily compete, if not even supersede her male contemporaries who accepted her as long as she submitted under patriarchal strictures characteristic of that time. Both through the efforts by other artists and writers and through her own self-promotion by means of the portrait print and her publications, Van Schurman succeeded in creating one of the most successful media campaigns for herself in the middle of the seventeenth century.²⁴⁹

However, things radically changed in 1664 when this female intellectual and artist suddenly turned to a religious sect founded and led by the former Jesuit priest Jean de Labadie who had converted to Protestantism and preached a form

249 She has actually attracted my attention in international scholarship; see, for instance, Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century*. Ideas in Context, 99 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); see also Michael Spang, *Wenn sie ein Mann wäre: Leben und Werk der Anna Maria van Schurman, 1607–1678* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Constant Venesoen, *Anne Marie de Schurman femme savante (1607–1678): correspondance*. Textes de la Renaissance, 80 (Paris: Champion, 2004).

of religious socialism. Van Schurman, to the horror of her contemporaries, even joined that movement and later rose to become one of their leaders. The Labadists insisted on the need for all faithful to be internally illuminated, almost like medieval mystics, then on communally shared property, and on manual labor to maintain themselves economically. Because Labadie rejected the Reformed Church in The Netherlands, his group suffered from persecutions, but they could ultimately settle well in Friesland, building up their own, religiously determined community.

In her last and major writing, *Eukleria* (1673), Van Schurman defended the Labadists and provided a kind of autobiography. But she faced severe criticism from her former supporters and admirers, many of whom claimed that she had fallen mad. In fact, there were good reasons for their sharp opposition because Labadism threatened to undermine the unified Reformed Church in The Low Countries. At the same time the witch craze raged throughout Europe, and females such as Van Schurman simply fit the general concept men had of women as being prone to hysteria attacks because of their cold and wet nature according to the humoral theory derived from Galen and still embraced in the seventeenth century.²⁵⁰ While the male critics had glowingly praised her when she was part of their community, so to speak, they aggressively turned against her when she left their world and joined that religious community, which by itself constituted a severe critique of male values in a pre-modern capitalistic society, if not betrayal. The accusation of madness proved to be the most effective, especially because it was directed against a woman, even though Van Schurman had enjoyed the men's highest approval beforehand. But her new religious orientation and her life in that 'socialist' community proved to be too much of a challenge for the male authorities, particularly because she never married and insisted on her emancipation from male patronage. This was then the perfect recipe to cast her as an insane person, a woman suffering from an extreme case of hysteria who transgressed all traditional gender boundaries and even insisted on her own spirituality.

Worse even, as Peacock points out, Van Schurman opposed the emerging Cartesian rationality and insisted on her mystical perception of the Godhead as an alternative, perhaps as the only valid method of rapprochement with Him. Not intellectual strategies would help to find God, but only God's own grace bestowed

250 But Paracelsus had already embarked on a very different approach in medical practice, even if his major efforts did not change the overall perspective embraced by the masses, and even the intellectual elite, as long as it served their own purposes to maintain their male authority; see the contributions to this volume by Andrew Weeks and Thomas Willard.

upon the individual in a mystical fashion once his or her life had proven to be virtuous and chaste could achieve that goal. For Van Schurman, the Protestant martyr Anne Askew (1520/21–1546) became her fervently defended role model because of her courage, faith, and inner strength with which she accepted her execution at the stake.

We still can admire Van Schurman in her dedication and passionate embrace of religion within the Labadist community especially because she espoused, in a way, the somewhat medieval concept of mysticism, insisting for herself that the experience of God was possible not through the male model of authority, but through her own inner epiphany, or revelation. Intriguingly, as Peacock notices, in her *Eukleria* she hardly makes references to Labadie or his successor Yvon; instead she presents her own views and experiences, and does not shy away any longer from presenting herself in her female identity. Little wonder that her male opponents then could only resort to the common strategy of categorizing her as completely mad because she defied so energetically and effectively all male authority. However, since her last work was published within the Labadist community, and since she was no longer required to model her behavior and thoughts according to patriarchal values in the outside world, her ‘madness’ actually represented for her the long sought-after intellectual and spiritual freedom.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a fascination, even obsession, with the devil, demons, and evil spirits in general, as one can see from the popularity of a new form of literature, “the devil book.”²⁵¹ Although the fear of the devil was shared by Catholics and Protestant, it was much stronger among Protestants because, unlike Catholics, they could not call upon on the help of saints or the Virgin Mary to protect them. Devil books were a Protestant form of literature, not a Catholic one, and they illustrated the dramatic intensification of this obsession with and fear of the devil as an omnipresent force attacking souls and causing individuals to become mad.

As the available documents richly illustrate, the assumed presence of the devil and his minions had a profound effect on people’s minds, often leading to extreme forms of melancholy and madness – here differently defined as in the case of Jakob Böhme (see above). In her contribution to this volume, Allison P.

251 Keith L. Roos, *The Devil in 16th Century German Literature: The Teufelsbücher*. European University Papers, 1: German language and literature, 68 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1972); Albrecht Classen, “The Devil in the Early Modern World and in Sixteenth-Century German Devil Literature,” *The Faustian Century: German Literature in the Age of Luther and Faustus*, ed. J. M. van der Laan and Andrew Weeks (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), 257–83.

Coudert describes why early modern men and women were convinced there was a terrifying increase in the number of mad individuals, whose disturbed thoughts and actions were a sign of the devil's increasing dominion and his ability to literally possess the demented. She shows how the upsurge in incidents of demonic possession reflected the profound changes in religious, economic, social, and political relationships that occurred under the impact of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, urbanization, and the transition from a feudal to a proto-capitalist economy. It was only in the eighteenth century that madness began to be separated from religion. The theology of madness then gave way to the medicalization of madness and, finally, to the psychology of madness.

Coudert questions the conclusion reached by Michel Foucault and his disciples that the eighteenth century was the age of "The Great Confinement," when the insane were incarcerated in greater numbers than ever before. In actuality, incarceration rates throughout Europe were extremely low in the age of Enlightenment, only increasing in the following century. There is also no evidence to support Foucault's contention that psychiatry was developed by the bourgeoisie to confine the poor. Nevertheless, even though Foucault's reading of the treatment of madness in the Enlightenment is largely inaccurate, his work profoundly energized the discussion and encouraged scholars to take the subject of madness seriously and see it as part of the larger religious and spiritual landscape of the early modern period.

From here the volume makes a deliberate jump and turns to the very present, concluding with the contribution by Hester E. Oberman, who inquires about the meaning of the belief system for all individuals, irrespective of its specific content. Her critical inquiries pertain, once again, to mental health, but now viewed through a religious lens insofar as an individual's spiritual well-being depends on, as she argues, embracing a belief system of any kind, the overbelief. Very similar to medieval mystics or any other religious persons, modern people depend on the concept of a spiritual dimension beyond the material existence, which alone really gives meaning in our lives.

While the Middle Ages and the early modern age were deeply religious,²⁵² the modern time seems to experience, at least in the West, an increasing secu-

²⁵² For some important exceptions, see Peter Dinzelbacher, *Unglaube im "Zeitalter des Glaubens": Atheismus und Skeptizismus im Mittelalter* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2009); see also the contributions to *Atheismus im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance*, ed. Friedrich Niewöhner. Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, 12 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999). Cf. also Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande*, 3 vols. Vol. 1: *Einleitung – Teufelsfurcht und Aufklärung im sogenannten Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1922).

larization, with a growing number of people who simply do not want to belong to a church, though they still express religious feelings or have religious needs, so-called *nones*, who seriously look for meaning in life beyond the physical limitations, particularly because of the ever growing globalization and cyber technology seemingly making everything possible in our post-modern world. Life's contingency, however, constantly reminds us, if we are willing to listen, to the overarching need to accept a belief system that can create sense and direction.

Oberman alerts us to the currently ever widening gap between the sciences and the humanities, hence also religion and the arts, yet warns us that even the infinitesimal expansion of our knowledge about the minutest biological and chemical processes will not reach the desired goal of comprehending the complex whole of life as such because the physical laws behind the basic building blocks of life deprive us, ultimately, of meaning and significance in this life.²⁵³ In this sense, medieval theologians and mystics were already a major step ahead of us because they were graced with revelations of the Godhead and hence empowered to transcend all human limits to perceive the universal wholeness, unity, or harmony, to use Boëthian terms (in his *De consolazione philosophiae*, 525). They predicated their interpretation of human nature on synderesis, the natural inclination toward good, which answered for them at least in that context the tough question regarding the nature of evil.²⁵⁴ The more the sciences progress, the more the arts, religion, philosophy, literature, and related fields are called upon to provide the complimentary other half of all human existence. Pure knowledge down to the final etiology ironically destroys all hope in humans ever to understand the reasons for our existence. Consequently, as Oberman insists, religion, at least in its broadest possible definition, offers the most critical response to the science, not rejecting it at all, but rather embracing it as one of the branches

253 For a critical perspective by a scientist, see Robert G. Bednarik. "Rendering Humanities Sustainable," *Humanities Open Access* 1 (2012): 64–71 (online journal). <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/1/1/64>; opposing him, Albrecht Classen, "The Challenges of the Humanities, Past, Present, and Future: Why the Middle Ages Mean So Much For Us Today and Tomorrow," *Humanities Open Access* 3.1 (2014) (see note 88).

254 See the contributions to *The Normativity of the Natural: Human Goods, Human Virtues, and Human Flourishing*, ed. Mark J. Cherry. Philosophical Studies in Contemporary Culture, 16 ([Dordrecht:] Springer, 2009); and to "*Radix totius libertatis*"; *zum Verhältnis von Willen und Vernunft in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie*; 4. Hannoveraner Symposium zur Philosophie des Mittelalters, *Leibniz Universität Hannover vom 26. bis 28. Februar 2008*, ed. Günther Mensching. Contradictio, 12 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011). For a good discussion of synderesis focusing on the Middle Ages, see "Medieval Theories of Conscience," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online, Nov. 23, 1998, last revised July 7, 2011 (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/conscience-medieval/>; last accessed on Feb. 7, 2014).

of human endeavors within the visionary umbrella of spiritual life enlightened and illuminated by a divine entity beyond all comprehension. According to Max Scheler, we are all *Gott-Sucher*, God-Seekers, whether we admit and know it or not since life can, perhaps has to be, defined as the quest for meaning. Meaning, however, does not rest in the physical existence only. In other words, ontology has to be paired with mysticism; rational cognition must be paired with spiritual cognition to do justice to the composite nature of human life.

Oberman connects these observations and conclusions with the phenomenon of mental health, and suggests that mental disability tends to result from the absence of a meaning of life, causing depression. Following William James in his opposition to Sigmund Freud's theories, and supporting the case made by the sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson regarding the goal of life to build complexity in all its manifestations, she argues that in light of recent findings by neuroscience religion proves to be a positive force that allows the individual to come to peace with itself because it finds itself suddenly connected with a supreme being, which grants meaning here in this life. Oberman does not talk about the Church, or the Religion, but about a religious belief, hence about the spiritual dimension in human existence, without which mental stress, for instance, can reach dangerous levels and destroy the individual. Reduction to a mere material etiology of all life misses the point, which even most scientists would agree with, since complexity is the matrix of all biological and spiritual operations.

Taking up Rudolf Otto's famous term 'the numinous,' Oberman suggests that against all attempts by twentieth-century scientists to get rid of religion, the religious, or numinous, has withstood the test of time and continues to constitute an essential component of our being, spiritually. Hence, her ultimate question, the litmus test for all studies of spirituality, is: *how we believe*, and not *what we believe*. Because of this approach, we can close the circle of all human epistemology, since the matter of religion simply provides, or creates, meaning, without which we cannot live, as Max Scheler (1874–1928) had famously formulated in his *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (1921; *On the Eternal in Man*): it is the "essential endowment of the human mind." And this meaning does not simply result from the rational explanation of our existence here on earth; instead, as all cultures throughout time have confirmed, it is intimately associated with a spiritual component of life itself.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ I quote here from Oberman's article; Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. Bernard Noble (1921; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010). See also the contributions to *Religion und Metaphysik als Dimensionen der Kultur*, ed. Ralf Becker and Ernst Wolfgang Orth. Trierer Studien zur Kulturphilosophie: Paradigmen menschlicher Orientierung, 18 (Würzburg:

Altogether, we can thus conclude that the study of medicine, mental health, and religion in the pre-modern world allows us to enter into many fascinating, far-reaching, and deeply significant topics underlying much of all cultural, spiritual, and medical history. Questions pertaining to madness and healing methods, the quest for spiritual transformation and individual happiness, the search for the best possible medical procedures, and the efforts to combine words or poetry with medicine in order to establish health and happiness all prove to be profoundly relevant for the understanding of the past world and for the inquiry into what medieval and early modern concepts of the individual in relationship to the divine might have to tell us for our own efforts to find our own identity and to establish a healthy, fulfilling existence. Although none of the contributors will address mystics specifically – my own remarks above are the exception, not by design, but by circumstances – their divinely inspired revelations and visions represented in many different ways the enormous potential of medieval epistemology for our own perception and understanding of the modern world.

One of the major appeals of the Middle Ages and the early modern age for us today consists of the enormous potential of the sense of hope expressed both in religious and in secular literature.²⁵⁶ Both the medieval mystics, such as Hilde-

Königshausen & Neumann, 2011). However, criticism of religion as an institution which imposes, as some argue, a strongly patriarchal worldview on the believer, continues and is robustly supported by recent psychohistorical research. Peter Dinzelsbacher, for instance, in “Die doppelte Wahrheit heute. Über das Nebeneinander der archaisch-religiösen und progressiv-profanen Weltsicht in einer Person,” *Aufklärung und Kritik* 21.1 (2014): 85–102, points out, as he sees it, contradictions in the arguments of those who defend religion and religious institutions as fundamental for society, especially Christian society, both in the Middle Ages and well into the modern age (if not until today). He goes so far as to suggest that religion, as a frame of mind, reflects atavistic features in the human brain responsible for the perceived need for an authority figure in a patriarchal world. Faith thus would be a function of an archaic personality hidden underneath the rational mind. But Dinzelsbacher does not necessarily argue against the existence of the numinosum per se; he only criticizes its practical functionalization by the Church. More specifically, as he confirmed in an email to me, March 19, 2014, the numinosum constitutes a form of imagination, if not fantasy. In this regard I could not quite agree with his position, considering the evidence I have put together in this long Introduction, and hence also in line with Oberman’s arguments. Nevertheless, I thank the author for sharing his provocative and insightful publication, fresh off the press.

256 Flo Keyes, *The Literature of Hope in the Middle Ages and Today: Connections in Medieval Romance, Modern Fantasy, and Science Fiction* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2006); Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006); Bent Greve, *Happiness* (Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2012); Amy Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*. Studies in Spirituality and Theology, 1 (Notre Dame, IN, and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); Albrecht Classen, “The Dialectics of Mystical Love in the Middle Ages: Violence/Pain and

gard of Bingen or Birgitta of Sweden, and the seventeenth-century mystic Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) have suddenly much to tell us once again. The entire cult of saints and our probing of mystical texts from the Middle Ages and far beyond reflects a growing awareness today that spirituality is an essential component of all human life, as Hester E. Oberman underscores so convincingly in her contribution to this volume. Health, both physical and mental, depends on a holistic approach to well-being, and for us today to understand who we really are as human beings it proves to be astoundingly productive to reconsider countless messages, insights, perspectives, and ideas already developed in the Middle Ages and the early modern age. The present volume hopes to provide innovative angles in the ever-ongoing search for meaning, health, and illumination, but here from a mostly historical point of view.

It is my great pleasure to express my gratitude to numerous colleagues and institutions who have made the publication of these contributions possible. First of all, I am most thankful to all the authors who originally presented their papers at an international symposium that I had organized at The University of Arizona, Tucson, May 3–4, 2013. But this volume does not simply comprise the proceedings. Instead, each piece accepted at the end was thoroughly evaluated, carefully selected, then it went through an extensive revision process, before it was finally accepted for publication. Everyone demonstrated incredible patience and a cooperative spirit. We employed, as much as we could, a peer-review process, which was much more intensive than in most other cases, and I am very thankful for the numerous comments and suggestions by colleagues helping me achieving the best results for everyone involved. We could call it a group peer review process.

But neither the symposium nor this volume would have been possible without some financial support. I would like to thank the Departments of German Studies, Russian and Slavic, French and Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, Sociology, Religious Studies, Africana, the School of International Language, Literatures, and Cultures (SILLC), the Dean of the College of Humanities, the Office of Undergraduate Education (all at the UA), and the publishing house De Gruyter (Berlin and Boston) for their generosity. I am also pleased to recognize the support from the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at ASU, Tempe. The participants in the symposium paid their own way, housing, and registration, so I must thank them and their academic institutions for this critical support. Also, without

Divine Love in the Mystical Visions of Mechthild of Magdeburg and Marguerite Porete,” *Studies in Spirituality* 20 (2010): 143–60.

the help of the staff at Walter de Gruyter in Berlin we would not have been able to get the manuscript ready for the final printing. Again, a big thank you to all of them.

It would be nice to imagine that this volume might change the way how we approach today mental health, spirituality, and religion both from a historical and contemporary perspective and recognize the deep interlacing of all three areas. Even though I could not attract colleagues in the science and medical field to join us in this book project,²⁵⁷ I hope that this Introduction and the articles assembled here will be of importance and interest for them as well.²⁵⁸ The pre-modern field seems to be the most promising at any rate for building bridges between the sciences/medicine and the humanities once again, since many of the important writers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been medical doctors or had at least received some education in that area.²⁵⁹ The disciplinary boundaries then were not as high as they appear to be today, and the quest for knowledge and understanding was much more holistic then. Of course, no one suggests that we simply return to the Middle Ages, for instance. At the same time, it certainly behooves us to reflect upon past worlds, societies, cultures, literatures, and sciences as a reservoir of ideas, experiences, and visions that could and should always be tapped into again. Combined with past insights and ideas, modern research into mental health, physical well-being, but even into physical conditions of our universe might be able to find alternatives to 'canonical' concepts.

257 I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions to our symposium by two colleagues who subsequently decided, unfortunately, not submit their pieces. Their papers indicated, however, how much interdisciplinary research could be realized, combining the Humanities with Integrative Medicine, for instance. Viswanathan Rajesh (Department of Psychiatry, University of Arizona) gave a workshop on: "Self Awareness – Limitations of Design or Limited Edition in Current Times." And Jean Baruch (Tucson, AZ, Beads of Courage) discussed the critical tenets and principles of her work with children in hospitals: "Alleviating the Experience of Suffering Through Narrative Medicine."

258 I was privileged to participate in a most interdisciplinary conference by giving a talk myself on mysticism, wellness, and spirituality. This conference, entitled as "Humanities, Medicine, and Wellness," was organized by Karen Seat and Hester Oberman, together with the Dean of COH, Mary Wildner-Bassett, at the University of Arizona, Feb. 26–28, 2014; see <http://hmw.arizona.edu/> (last accessed on March 11, 2014).

259 Albrecht Classen, "Die Figur des Arztes in der deutschen und europäischen Literatur des Spätmittelalters und der Frühneuzeit, speziell im Hinblick auf Paracelsus' Lehren über die rechte Ausbildung zum Arzt," *Religion und Gesundheit* (see note 40); id., "Die Figur des Arztes in den spätmittelalterlichen Fastnachtspielen," *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 47.3 (2012): 429–42. A famous case was the Zürich city physician and playwright Jakob Ruf (1505–1558); see the new edition of his works by Hildegard Elisabeth Keller et al., Jakob Ruf, *Leben, Werk und Studien*. 5 vols. (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2008).

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Constructing the Early Irish Cult of Brigit

Casting our minds back to a different age, the seventh century to be precise, we find something which might amaze us; of the three *primi* of Ireland it was not Patrick nor indeed Columba who was the most well-known or well-established, either in Ireland or on mainland Europe, but Brigit, saint and abbess of Kildare. Two centuries later, however, she had been eclipsed by the supremacy of Patrick through the political manoeuvring of Armagh and the rise of the dynasty of the Northern Uí Néill.

If credence is to be given to our surviving written records, the woman known as Brigit of Kildare was born either in 452, 454 or 456 and died in 524, 526 or 528 C.E.¹ Unlike Patrick and Columba, none of her own writings are known.² However, what she lacks in primary sources, she more than makes up for in secondary sources. No other Irish saint is comparable to Saint Brigit in terms of the sheer volume of medieval sources and references which exist today.³ The Brigidine dossier contains Latin lives, vernacular lives, hymns, poems, prophecies, martyrologies, litanies, short verses, glosses, genealogy and of course the many

¹ See *The Annals of Ulster to A.D. 1131*, ed. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983). In order to accept these dates as reliable—our sources must be reliable, and therein lies one of our main problems. The majority of our sources pertaining to this period of Irish history is meagre at best, and untrustworthy at most. The various dates recorded for the birth and death of Saint Brigit [*Sanct Brigit*], are found in the Annals. But these entries were often recorded after the event. Although the Annals are important sources—if not indeed at times vital to our understanding of early Irish society and culture—it is often the case that one cannot rely on Annals referencing the fifth and the sixth century, due to the fact that it was long after that period, and in our instance the time of Saint Brigit herself, in which these recordings took place. Due to the fact that these Annals are not contemporary with the period in which Brigit lived, it is therefore hard to have any faith in these dates. Be that as it may, the Annals of Ulster (*AU*) are believed to be the most reliable and trustworthy source.

² Unlike St. Patrick's *Confessio* († ca. 460/490) or the various texts attributed to Columba. See *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*, ed. Ludwig Bieler, 2 vols. (Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1952), I: 56–91; cf. Michael Lapidge, "Columbanus and the Antiphonary," *Peritia* 4 (1985): 107–16; James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical. An Introduction and Guide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 261–62.

³ Pádraig Ó Riain, "Pagan Example and Christian Practice: A Reconsideration," *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Doris Edel (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), 144–56.

references of Brigit found in the lives of other saints.⁴ These documents allow us to construct a picture of the cult of Saint Brigit in early Christian Ireland. With this in mind, I will limit myself to addressing two issues: briefly setting out the nature of Brigit's cult—both literary and non-literary—and the value of the literary sources in attempting to identify the prevalent issues and attitudes of the milieu in which they were produced.

The first reference to Brigit in the Irish literary tradition is in a sixth-century text that states that she will be another Mary [for the Irish] (*bid alaMaire*).⁵ If one can rely on this date we can surmise that Brigit's cult was up and running and well established within fifty years or so of her death. That's very early for her reputation to have appeared in writing. Literacy was in its infancy in Ireland and here we have someone comparing her to the mother of the son of God. Brigit therefore holds this unique position of being compared favorably to the Virgin exemplar and indeed later on is bestowed the unique position of bishop.⁶ No other female saint achieved this status. By the twelfth century with her hagiographical tradition well-established an unknown writer of an Irish Life⁷ presents her as the exemplary virgin: as she is the Mary of the Irish: she is the spouse of Jesus Christ; she is the queen of the south.⁸

It is in the hagiographical material, the *vitae* and the vernacular *bethada*, that was one of the most popular genres in medieval Ireland and which in turn “makes up one of the most extensive classes of material relating, *ex prima facie*, to the early history of Ireland, that Brigit comes to the fore. Their magnitude, and the fact that for so much of the past they are the only records, gives them importance.”⁹ Extant today are some one hundred Latin *vitae* of sixty Irish saints and

⁴ See *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae: partim hactenus ineditae ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum recognovit prolegomenis notis indicibus instruxit*, ed. Charles Plummer, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910); id., *Bethada Náem nÉrenn; Lives of Irish Saints. Edited from the Original MSS. with Introduction, Translations, Notes, Glossary and Indexes*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922).

⁵ See *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, ed. Michael A. O'Brien (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), 79–81. Cf. M. A. O'Brien, “The Old Irish Life of St Brigit: Part II: Introduction and Notes,” *Irish Historical Studies* I.iv (1938–1939): 343–53.

⁶ See *Bethu Brigitte*, ed. Donncha Ó hAodha (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978).

⁷ See *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore, edited with a Translation, Notes, and Indices*, Anecdota, ed. Whitley Stokes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 34–53, 182–200, 318–36.

⁸ “An mhaighdean eiseamláireach í óir is í Muire na nGael í. Is í bantiarna Chríost í; is í ríon an deiscirt í.” It will be seen that this was a perspective that held strong—a perspective based on sources which were widely available to the author and a perspective that we see in folklore which has survived to our own day.

⁹ See *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. Ludwig Bieler and Fergus Kelly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 293.

some fifty Irish language Lives of forty saints.¹⁰ Some of these Lives are only available to us through continental copies—this is particularly the case with Brigit for whom a grand total of nine individual lives were produced. In this she is unique.

Brigit enjoyed a tri-dimensional cult: the local, the national and the international. There are remnants of her cult preserved at home and abroad, not only in manuscript form, but also as numerous relics, as well as a wealth of continental place names from the Lowlands as far south as Rome.

Let us briefly look at the Continent. Of huge importance to the Irish monks abroad was the homeland—*Hibernia*. It is a testament to Brigit's own widespread popularity—and of course no doubt to her loyal subjects—the amount of sources available to us which were written outside of Ireland. There are numerous manuscripts¹¹ from the eighth to the twelfth century—which testify to the adoration and renown of Brigit's status on the Continent. The existence of a loyal Brigidine following on the Continent is attested as early as ca. 700¹² in the form of a short personal petition: *sancta brigta ora pro nobis* on the margin of a manuscript.¹³

And what of the topographical evidence which highlights the fame and popularity of Brigit on the Continent? Dotted throughout Europe¹⁴ are place

10 See Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 5–8, 390–98. Cf. *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica*. Subsidia Hagiographica, 15, ed. Charles Plummer (Brussels: Socii Bollandiani, 1925), 171–285; Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2], 304–309. The earliest extant Irish saint's Life is that of Columbánus († ca. 615), see Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2], 186–205.

11 Ludwig Bieler, "Brigit, Saint," *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*, ed. Richard J. Hayes, 3 vols. (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1965), I, 331–9; cf. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis: A-I & K-Z*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901).

12 Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Rath Melsigi, Willibrord, and the earliest Echternach Manuscripts," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 17–49; Ó Riain, "Pagan Example and Christian Practice: A Reconsideration"; *The Martyrology of Tallaght from the Book of Leinster and MS 5100–4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, eds. Richard Irvine Best and Hugh Jackson Lawlor (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1931), xi; Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2].

13 This is the Martyrology of Willibrord or *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* [MS D ii 3 [1238], f. 30^v]. But the actual manuscript itself was written in Echternach in Luxemburg [Lat 10837] and is now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale Paris—*Kl. Feb. et in scotia sanctae brigidae virginis*. See *The Calendar of St. Willibrord from MS. Paris. Lat. 10837: A Facsimile with Transcription, Introduction, and Notes*, ed. Henry Austin Wilson (London: Harrison and Sons, 1918); Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2], 233–34 and 634.

14 Louis Gougaud, *Les Saints irlandais hors d'Irlande. Étudiés dans le culte et dans la dévotion traditionnelle* (Louvain: Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, 1936); Maud Joynt, *Christianity in Celtic Lands: A history of the Churches of the Celts, their origin, their development, influence, and mutual relations* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932); John O'Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints with Special Festivals, and the Commemorations of Holy Persons compiled from Calendars*,

names which show the widespread devotion and veneration of Brigit.¹⁵ Brigit was strongly associated with France¹⁶, but one could also say the same about Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy and Switzerland.¹⁷ Ó Fiaich believed that Fosses of Belgium was the oldest devotional place outside of Ireland and that her memory was being honored there from 665 onwards up to present times (1971).¹⁸ Another component of a saint's cult were effigies and images¹⁹ in their honor. Ó Fiaich mentions churches in France, widespread dedications in Germany, but equally numerous are the veneration in Spain, Belgium and Italy.

Having just outlined the popularity of the cult of St Brigit it should come as no great surprise that her relics are widespread and equally dispersed. Her relics are corporeal and non-corporeal. Of huge importance to the monastery's honor, status, and prestige was the housing and display of its founder's remains. As Clancy sounded on a rather macabre note: "It [the cult] is not concerned with historicity. It is concerned only to establish a profitable, often salvific relationship between the holy dead and their living adherents."²⁰ Although her biogra-

Martyrologies and Various Sources, relating to the Ancient Church History of Ireland 10 vols. (Dublin: Duffy and Sons, 1873), II, 211–24; Simon Young, "Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole 829–76, and the Cult of St Brigit in Italy," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 35 (1998): 13–26; id., "Brigid of Kildare in Early Medieval Tuscany," *Studia Hibernica* 30 (1998–1999): 251–55; Andrew Breeze, "The Shrine of St. Brigit at Olite, Spain," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 16 (1988): 85–95; H. M. McClintock, "The Mantle of St. Brigit at Bruges," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 66 (1936): 32–40 and E. G. Bowen, "The Cult of St. Brigit," *Studia Celtica* VIII (1974): 33–47.

15 These can be placed into three separate categories: places named after Brigit; churches named after Brigit; and statues or images to revere and commemorate Brigit. See Tomás Ó Fiaich, *Irish Cultural Influence in Europe: VIth to XIIth century key to map* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1971); id., *Gaelscrínte san Eoraip* (Dublin: Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta, 1986); Róisín Ní Mheara, *In Search of Irish Saints: The Peregrination Pro Christo* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994); id., *Early Irish Saints in Europe: Their Sites and their Stories with 240 Illustrations and 83 Colour Plates* (Vienna: Ueberreuter Print und Digimedia GmbH, 2001).

16 Ó Fiaich, *Gaelscrínte san Eoraip*, 76, "gur dheacair an Bhriotáin a shárú in ómós agus gean do Bhríd . . . a hainm fós ar bhailte sa tír . . . ní furasta a rá cé mhéad eaglaisí agus séipéil atá ann ina honóir (níos mó ná 30 gan amhras)."

17 See Ó Fiaich, *Irish Cultural Influence in Europe*; id., *Gaelscrínte san Eoraip*; see also Young, "Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole 829–76, and the Cult of St Brigit in Italy" [see note 14]; id., "Brigid of Kildare in Early Medieval Tuscany" [see note 14].

18 See Ó Fiaich, *Irish Cultural Influence in Europe*; id., *Gaelscrínte san Eoraip*.

19 Ní Mheara, *Early Irish Saints in Europe*.

20 Thomas Owen Clancy, "Columba, Adomnán and the Cult of Saints in Scotland," *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots: Saint Columba, Iona and Scotland*, ed. Dauvit Broun and Thomas Owen Clancy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999): 3–34.

pher, Cogitosus, does not furnish us with a detailed account of her death,²¹ he twice states that the body of Brigit is reposing in Kildare; that the relics of Brigit are proudly displayed at the altar and that the monastery of Kildare undertook extensive renovations²² and that the shrine was decorated in gold, silver and other jewels.²³ Charles-Edwards believed this to be the earliest surviving “evidence for the elevation and enshrinement of relics in Ireland”. It therefore shows to us today—but more importantly then—how well-orchestrated was the cult of Saint Brigit.²⁴ Cogitosus skillfully highlights the importance of Kildare—so many

21 St. Patrick's biographer—Tírechán—tells us that Brigit will be amongst those who will be buried in Sabhall Pádraig (on the outskirts of Downpatrick, Co. Down) on the Day of Judgment. See Ludwig Bieler, “The Celtic Hagiographer,” *Studia Patristica V. Papers Presented to the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford 1959. Part III: Liturgica, Monastica et Ascetica, Philosophica*, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1962), 243–65; here 262: “In 1186 the relics of SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columcille were discovered by Bishop Malachy of Down and deposited, under the joint auspices of the bishop and of John de Courcy, in a common shrine in Down Cathedral. It seems probable that de Courcy, to celebrate the occasion, ordered Jocelin to write new Lives of Ireland's *Trias Thaumaturga*.” According to the Martyrology of Donegal [*The Martyrology of Donegal. A Calendar of the Saints of Ireland. Translated from the Original Irish by John O'Donovan*, ed. James Henthorn Todd and William Reeves (Dublin: Irish Archaeological & Celtic Society, 1864), 34–37], the body of Brigit was brought to Down upon her death: “Acus ro hadnaiced i nDún in aon tumba lá Patraic mar ar hadnact Colam Cille iaram.”

22 Kim R. McCone, “Bríd Chill Dara,” *Léachtaí Cholm Cille XII: Na Mná sa Litríocht* (1982): 30–92.

23 See Joannes Bollandus et al. (eds.), “*Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitosa*,” *Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur quae ex Latinis et Graecis, aliarumque gentium antiquis monumentis collegit, digessit, notis illustravit* 67 vols. (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1863): I, 135–41; here §37 (141) “Nec et de miraculo in reparatione ecclesiae facto tacendum est, in qua gloriosa amborum, hoc est, Archiepiscopi Conlei et hujus Virginis florentissimae Brigidae corpora, a dextris et a sinistris altara is decorati, in monumentis posita, ornatis vario cultu auri et argenti et gemmarum pretiosi lapidis, atque coronis aureis et argenteis desuper pendentes, ac diversis imaginibus a cum caelaturis variis et colribus, requiescunt. Et in veteri nova res nascitur actu.”

24 See Charles Doherty, “The Use of Relics in Early Ireland,” eds. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter, *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter. Ireland and Europe: The Early Church*. Veröffentlichungen des Europa Zentrums Tübingen: Kulturwissenschaftliche Reihe (Stuttgart: Klett-Clotta, 1984), 89–101. See also Charles Doherty, “The Basilica in Early Ireland,” *Peritia* 3 (1984): 303–15; Ailbhe Séamus Mac Shamhráin, *Church and Polity in Pre-Norman Ireland: the Case of Glendalough* (Maynooth: An Sagart 1996), 44–70; John Ryan, “The Early Irish Church and the Holy See,” *Studies* 49 (1960): 1–16; M. P. Sheehy, “The Relics of the Apostles and Early Martyrs in the Mission of St Patrick,” *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 95 (1961): 372–76; Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain: The Hunter Marshall Lectures delivered at the University of Glasgow in January and February 1968* (London: Oxford University Press for the University of Glasgow, 1971).

people are visiting the shrine of Brigit—some evidently with money—that it was necessary to extend the actual monastery—thus suggesting that her fame and status is increasing—a simple yet effective way to indicate that her cult is strong and growing amongst the Irish. Be that as it may, how is it then that some of Brigit's corporeal remains ended up entombed across Europe?²⁵ Tradition has it after all that Saint Fergal took relics of Saint Brigit with him to the monastery of St Peter in Salzburg 'where in the inventory of 846, a relic of 'S *Brigide*' is registered.'²⁶ Hogan noted that Brigit's finger was in the monastery of Cologne²⁷ and Bowen her skull in the Church of St John the Baptist in Lumiar.²⁸ Of the more important non-corporeal relics are Brigit's Staff and The Cloak of Saint Brigit.²⁹

25 See <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001C/index.html> (last accessed on March 4, 2014): s.a 1538, "Sluaghadh leis in iustis Shaxanach gu Leth Cathail 7 mainistir Dhuin do los-gadh leo 7 taissi Padraig & Choluim-Chille 7 Bhrigde do bhreth leo 7 dealbh Chatrina. Ocus in caiptin Saxanach do breth na deilbhe leis gu faithche caisléin Duin-a-Droma 7 e fein do dhul 'sin chaislen 7 poll do bheth 'sin caisdel 7 in fer-sin do thuitim ann trid mhirbhuile De 7 Catrina 7 gan a fhís osin gu se" ie, "A hosting by Gray the Saxon Justiciary to Leth-Cathail and the monastery of Down was burned by them and the relics of Patrick and Colum-cille and Brigit and the image of Catherine were carried off by them. And the Saxon captain took the image with him to the green of the castle of Dun-a-droma and he himself went into the castle and there was a hole in the castle and that man fell into it through miracles of God and Catherine, without tidings of him from that to this."

26 Ó Fiaich, *Gaelscrínte san Eoraip*, 76; Ní Mheara, *Early Irish Saints in Europe*, 138, 197 and 262.

27 See *Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae. An index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes*, ed. Edmund Hogan (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1910), s.n. *colofonida*.

28 Bowen, "The Cult of St. Brigit," [see note 14]. Cf. <http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/4046476> (last accessed on March 4, 2014): "At Lumiar there is a grand ceremony on St. Brigid's feast day, when the relic is exposed, as also during the octave. On St. John's day, it is likewise exposed. A fair is held on each occasion, which lasts the whole week. For miles around, peasants bring their cattle, and drive them three times around the church, according to an old custom. This probably originated from a knowledge that St. Brigid in early life had been engaged at pastoral occupations." Cf. John J. Dunne, *Shrines of Ireland* (Dublin: Veritas, 1989), 72 who suggested that "a relic of the saint believed to be a portion of her head was in a shrine in Fochaird in 1933."

29 McClintock, "The Mantle of St. Brigit at Bruges" [see note 14]. It is perhaps the most vivid and the most well-known of relics associated with Brigit in the public's imagination which is now housed in the church of San Sauver in Brugge. This I had the pleasure to view myself some years ago—and the conclusion I came to then—that Saint Brigit must have been a giant! Although, references exist to the *Brat Bride* in the literature, there is no account of that most famous of stories from folklore—where she placed her cloak on the ground which then spread the length and breadth of Leinster—thus establishing her rights to that area.

Our understanding of the term *cult* today is perhaps different to what the term evoked some 1600 years ago. In Christianity, *cultus* is the technical term for devotion or veneration extended to a particular saint and not to the worship of God. Perhaps therefore an accurate description of cult would be ‘devotion to a person or thing’. What form did that devotion or veneration take? Such a cult of a saint involves far more than what we today would associate with the term ‘history’ or ‘biography’.

The shaping of a saint’s cult relates to the memory of the saint as perceived by a community—in this instance the monks and scholars who see the significance of the person within a story of salvation of which they themselves are part. If ‘devotion to a person or thing’ is of paramount importance to the medieval hagiographer, it follows that he is far more concerned with detailing the miraculous work of the saint (both while alive and after death) than ensuring that he has his dates and chronology in order.

It therefore seems right to suggest that the miracles of a saint are far more important for someone writing documents relating to the cult than questions of accurate dates, the choreographed places and peoples visited, and why. In short, there is little in common between the medieval hagiographer and the modern historian. However, the two professions are easily confused in that both write accounts of the life of someone in the past. In very broad terms the difference can be put like this: the historian is interested in what happened then, and from her modern vantage point seeing what were the most significant aspects of that past time; the hagiographer on the other hand is looking at the saint’s importance right now—at the time of writing—and is only interested in the past in so far as it helps explain why the holy person is so significant to his community.

This devotion that I mentioned above manifests itself in the commemoration and eulogising of the *acta*—the outward manifestation of the miraculous nature of the saint. The Life of an Irish saint, “is a series of episodes, nearly always miraculous in nature, interspersed with prophesies, benedictions and maledictions all intended to glorify the subject of the biography and demonstrate his power.”³⁰ Great emphasis is therefore placed on the saint’s capacity to perform as many miracles as possible in their role as intercessor, so much so that many of the Lives conclude with a list of what Plummer termed the “superhuman virtues of the saint,” noting however that “this moral tribute is purely perfunctory, and is very largely common form.”³¹

30 Joynt, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* [see note 14], 53–54.

31 Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* [see note 4], I, xcii.

This “common form” was an intrinsic component in the lives produced in Ireland. The Irish monks diligently copied and imitated the European style of hagiography so much so that often time extracts from their colleagues abroad were taken over *verbatim*. This was not viewed as plagiarism but rather, as Kenney pointed out, “. . . the exercise of an equal right to draw on a stock of hagiographical lore.” Nor did it indicate a poverty of imagination.³² Indeed, often times, it was the opposite which was intended: “Rather, it reflected an attitude of reverence to the writer from whom the borrowing was made,” and as King has observed³³ “pointed to a supernatural view of human behaviour that has its ideal in imitation, not individuality.”

Certain themes³⁴ dominate the lives. The occurrences of miracles were evidence—if such were needed—of the holiness and sanctity of the subject hence the catalogue of miracles associated with the saint *ad nauseum*. Not dissimilar to the hero in secular heroic literature, there are supernatural qualities and aspects to the saint’s youth and general upbringing. The saint’s birth and conception are exceptional as are the dramatic death scenes and the way in which he or she will rise to take their rightful place beside God. Furthermore, as Gougaud suggested: “In many Irish hagiographical narratives the Christian miracle takes the place of the traditions, mythological or tribal, of the secular legends; and numerous are the points of resemblance between the methods of miracle-working saint and those of the magician of pre-Christian times,”³⁵ a point which had already been taken up by Stefan Czarnowski in his *Le Culte des Héros* (1919).

Such was the regularity and similarity in themes in the Irish lives, that one historian complained:

Most of these Lives are less than edifying, being little more than a catalogue of miracles and wonders, some of them amusing, most of them ridiculous . . . the same tedious formulae recur time after time often borrowed shamelessly from one life to another. With few exceptions, the saints’ Lives are a dismal swamp of superstition and perverted Christianity, dreary litanies of misplaced reverence and devotion.³⁶

³² Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2], 300.

³³ Margot H. King, “Western European Hagiography,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer, 13 vols. (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1982–89), VI, 66.

³⁴ Felim Ó Briain, “Miracles in the Lives of the Irish Saints,” *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* LXVI (1965): 331–42 at 332; id., “Irish Hagiography: Historiography and Method,” *Measgra i gcuimhne Mhichíl Uí Chléirigh .i. Miscellany of Historical and Linguistic studies in honour of Brother Michael Ó Cléirigh, O.F.M. Chief of the Four Masters*, ed. Sylvester O’Brien (Dublin: Assisi Press, 1944), 119–31.

³⁵ Joynt, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* [see note 14], 53.

³⁶ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London: Longman, 1995), 210.

I believe Ó Cróinín's remarks to be a bit too harsh when one considers that this literature belongs to a particular *genre*. I find myself in agreement with Ó Briain when he states that:

[A perusal] may lead the reader to the conclusion that even the earliest examples of Irish hagiography are worthless documents and do not merit the attention of the serious historian. Many hypercritical writers on early Irish history have drawn this conclusion, but it has usually been based on a very cursory study of the sources, and on a misunderstanding of the special class of literature to which hagiographical compilation belongs.³⁷

This obviously raises the question of the reliability and credibility of these documents, which are very problematic for the modern historian. After all, the further removed the medieval hagiographer was from the actual period he was describing, the more the document tells us about the writer's actual own time rather than that of his subject. "They are not, therefore, first-rate sources for those epochs," as Kenney noted, [however],

In an age when historical criticism was so defective, when the importance of objective truth and the difficulty of securing it were so little appreciated, when subjective ideas received such a free rein, trustworthy testimony could not be given by the writer far removed in time from the events he narrated . . . it forms, usually a true picture of the hagiographer's own age.³⁸

The *vitae* and *bethada* cannot therefore be relied wholly upon as historical documents or as testimony to history. And of course this was not their primary intention apart from the life of Adamhnán, perhaps (ca. 628–ca. 704).³⁹

Be that as it may, the Irish Saints' Lives should not be dismissed for they can offer us a useful perspective on life and society in Ireland during the author's own time; they can play a pivotal role in their account of the social and political in pre-Norman Ireland, although as Ó Cróinín remarked: ". . . most of the hagiographies have little claim to strictly historical importance. Most of their authors had access to only the most meagre written sources (lists of founders and their successors, for example) and the oral information that they purvey can never be wholly trusted."⁴⁰ Our earliest existing Life of Saint Brigit was not written until ca. 650. There is therefore a gap of nearly 125 years between the time of Brigit

37 Ó Briain, "Miracles in the Lives of the Irish Saints," [see note 34], 342.

38 Kenney, *The Sources* (see note 2), 296.

39 Alan Orr and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, ed. & trans., *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). See also Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 10.

40 Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (see note 36), 210.

and our earliest surviving Latin Life, *Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitoso*.⁴¹ What benefit can one glean from such a corpus and where does that leave us with the cult of Brigit of Kildare?

When seeking to construct the early cult of Brigit one must ask what value these writings hold for us then? They are valuable to us on a number of levels. By their sheer volume alone, these writings highlight that this material mattered and was in demand in early Ireland. But their value really lies in what they can tell us politically. To quote Kathleen Hughes, it is the “incidental information, reports of political affiliations no longer current, information about institutions, agriculture, social practices and the indirect evidence which reveals to us what it was the audience liked to hear.”⁴² The political aspect was a very important thread to the Life of a Saint, to such an extent that the life often times acted as the monastery’s charter. These charters—effectively propaganda tools—highlighted its rights and protected those interest rights, regulations, and more importantly taxation purposes of the monastery. One mustn’t forget that the monasteries of Kildare (Brigit), Armagh (Patrick), and Iona in Scotland (Columba)—along with many others—were all vying for the same position—head of all churches of the Gaelic Kingdom. This rivalry was highlighted both geographically and hagiographically.⁴³ As de Paor points out, “a great deal of hagiography in fact ratifies, as it were, agreements made between churches by arranging retrospectively a meeting between their saintly founders.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Bollandus et al., “*Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitoso*” (see note 23).

⁴² Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 220.

⁴³ See for example St. Patrick’s great exploits (Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* [see note 9], 136): “. . . Plantauit aeclessiam super Vadum Sei et alteram aeclessiam Cinnena<e> sancta <e> super Vadum Carnoi i mBoind et altera super Coirp raithe et altera super fossam Dallbronaig, quam tenuit episcopus filius Cairthin Cairtin, anunculus Brigatae sanctae. Fundauitque alteram in campo Echredd, alteram in campo Taidcni, quae dicitur Cell Bile (apud familiam Scire est), alteram in campo Echnach, in qua fuit Cassanus praespiter, alteram in Singitibus, alteram in campo Teloch, in qua sancta Brigita pallium cepit sub manibus filii Caille in Huisniuch Midi. . .” i.e., “. . . Patrick established a church at Áth Segi, and another one, of holy Cinnena, at Áth Carnói in the Boyne, and another on Coirp raithe, and another at the Moat of Dallbronach, which was held by bishop Mac Cairthin, an uncle of holy Brigit. He founded another (church) in Mag Echredd, another one in Mag Taidcni, which is called Cell Bile (it now belongs to the community of Scíre), another in Mag Echnach, the place of the priest Cassanus, another in Singite, another in Mag Bili beside the Ford of the Dog’s Head, another on Carmell’s Head in Mag Teloch, where holy Brigit received the veil from the hands of Mac Caille in Uisnech in Meath. . .”

⁴⁴ Liam de Paor, “The aggrandisement of Armagh,” *Historical Studies* VIII (1969): 95–110. See also *Three Middle-Irish Homilies on the Lives of Saint Patrick, Brigit and Columba*, ed. & trans. Whitley Stokes (Calcutta: s.p. 1877), 38–39 “. . . Luid Patraic & Brigit i maille friss do Ess Ruaid & ad-cobair eclais and & congball du h-ita Disiurt Patraic indíu. . .” i.e., “. . . Patrick and Brigit

It affords the writer to celebrate his own monastery through strategic alliances and indeed allegences with another monastery. A well-written, well-publicized and well-distributed life could gain notariety for the writer on both a personal and professional level, while also garnering great wealth, fame, and power for the monastery. It also highlighted that the monastery was well-skilled and schooled. It aided the founder's status (i.e., the saint's); it aided the monastery's status; by drawing a wider public (i.e., pilgrims), which endeavored to leave the state of the monastery's coffers in a healthier and more abundant state. This insight I believe is important when it comes to discussing Saint Brigit. Seeing as the monasteries gathered income from a wider audience than just the local congregation—this then leaves us with the understanding that there was more than a local dimension associated with the saint's cult. It broadens their appeal to a national level. One sees this eminently with Brigit—not only did she have the local element, but she also had the wider appeal associated with and attached to her cult—the national and indeed the international elements.

The main value of the Lives therefore is what they tell us about those who composed them, and that is where our main interest should be. In their dealings with Irish Saints' Lives, historians of medieval Ireland have gone through three phases; the first of absolute credence of their contents; the second of their dismissal and now the third shows a little more enlightenment so that nowadays we seek to interpret the lives in the context of the time they were written rather than the time they purport to describe.

One could argue that this Christian Brigit of Kildare is none other than the pagan Goddess. I mentioned earlier that the Irish redactors sought to stamp their own authority and distinctive style to suit their own particular values and needs of the native Irish tradition onto that of the imported Continental style, so much so that "numerous are the points of resemblance between the methods of miracle-working saint and those of the magician of pre-Christian times."⁴⁵ It would not be remiss of me to say that paganism had left an indelible mark on the Irish psyche.⁴⁶

along with him went to Essruaid, and he was minded to erect a church and a manse there at a place wherein to-day is Disert Patraic. . ."

⁴⁵ Joynt, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* (see note 14), 53.

⁴⁶ Felim Ó Briain, "Saga themes in Irish hagiography," *Féilsgríbhinn Torna: Essays and Studies presented to Professor Tadhg Ua Donnchadha (Torna)*, ed. Séamus Pender (Cork: Cork University Press, 1947), 33–42. As Daniel A. Binchy noted in, "St. Patrick and his Biographers: Ancient and Modern," *Studia Hibernica* 2 (1962): 7–173 at 57, "Unique in its characteristics. the plethora of pre-Christian and sub-Christian *motifs*, the survivals of animism, heathen mythology, folk-

Some of the ecclesiastical heroes mentioned in the existing hagiographical material have the characteristics normally associated with (Pagan) Gods and Goddess—and none more so than Saint Brigit. But what, with the coming of Christianity and the ushering in of a new order, had those exact same traits Christianized thus transforming (like some type of a changeling?) the hitherto pagan idol in order to facilitate the changing relationship the writer and the public in general had with its oral pagan past, thus eradicating and effectively usurping the previous role the pagan gods and goddess which had held great sway in the hearts and minds of the people.⁴⁷ According to O’Rahilly:

By thus humanizing and mortalizing the divinities of pagan Ireland, they [the monastic recorders of these pagan traditions] hoped to eradicate the pagan beliefs that still lingered on among many of their countrymen.⁴⁸

Who was this Brigit then? A pagan Goddess turned into saint? A Christian saint in her own right? Or an actual historical figure to whom certain traits or characteristics were attached? Does the nature of her popularity and cult allow us to argue that she had been accepted as an historical figure rather than a pagan goddess in the seventh century? Where are the sources which allow us to make an informed decision one way or the other?⁴⁹ It is very rare that one delves into any type of research pertaining to the Christian Brigit—the saint, the abbess, and exemplar virgin without immediately encountering her namesake—the pagan goddess. What reasons have scholars⁵⁰ to claim that she was more than likely a goddess turned saint? Giraldus Cambrensis⁵¹ (ca. 1146 – ca. 1223) in his *Topography of*

lore, druidism, primitive magic and secular saga, all combine to give the Irish *légendes hagiographiques* an unenviable notoriety.”

⁴⁷ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology* (Feltham: Hamlyn, 1970).

⁴⁸ Thomas F. O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), 261.

⁴⁹ Gougaud, *Les Saints irlandais hors d’Irlande*, 16: “D’une sainte qui jouit d’un très grand renom et d’une extraordinaire popularité non seulement en Irlande mais aussi en Écosse, en Angleterre et dans tant de pays du continent, on voudrait connaître la vie avec quelque détail. Mais cela est impossible, ses soi-disant biographies anciennes ne renfermant que de vagues aperçus et beaucoup d’anecdotes légendaires. L’historien moderne ne saurait donc retracer avec quelque certitude la suite des événements de son existence.”

⁵⁰ See Catherine McKenna, “Apotheosis and Evanescence: The fortunes of Saint Brigit in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,” *CSANA Yearbook 1: The Individual in Celtic Literatures*, ed. Joseph Falaky Nagy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001): 74–108.

⁵¹ Séathrún Céitinn’s (ca. 1569 – ca. 1644) opinion of Cambrensis’s history of Ireland is not too warm to say the least. See *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn do reir an athar Seathrun Ceiting, ollamh re diadhacht. The History of Ireland* eds. & trans., D. Comyn and P. S. Dinneen, 4 vols. (London: Irish

Ireland—as far as I can establish—without any explanation and it seems to snow-ball from there on—argued that the site of Kildare was hitherto a pagan sanctuary—thus creating an immediate and more importantly an historical link between the pagan and Christian Brigits. Smyth, I believe, encapsulates the current state of affairs:

. . . Kildare began life in the prehistoric Celtic past as a cult centre of the goddess Brigit, beside a sacred oak, which in the sixth century was taken over by a Christian virgin and her community of nuns—hence Cill Dara.⁵²

If Smyth is right, there is no denying that the status of the previous Brigit, the pagan goddess, would have enhanced and elevated rather than hindered the Christian Brigit, bearing in mind the pagan nature of Irish society some 1600 years ago. But, as Ó Riain points out:

To account for Brigit's status even partly in terms of a glorious pagan past is in fact to ignore the patent failure of all other divinities from among the ranks of the Tuatha Dé to make an even remotely comparable impact under Christian auspices. Here, the most notable failure to impress must surely be that of **Lugos* (Irish Lug), who, while a truly *grande divinité*, is scarcely identifiable as a Christian saint . . . while it would appear to be substantially true that a very large majority of the Irish saints derives directly from pre-Christian divinities, only one, that is Brigit of Kildare, achieved an elevated Christian status. Her elevated Christian status, on the other hand is arguably no more than a monument to the success of her 'handlers' in the church of Kildare aided and abetted by their political patrons, the Uí Dúnlainge . . . Similarly, there do not appear to be any grounds for believing that Brigit's very high status as a saint was influenced by *her previous role as a goddess*.⁵³

Ó Riain therefore accepts that the pagan element influenced the Christian. There is no denying that there existed a previous Brigit⁵⁴ which obviously contributed

Texts Society, 1902–14), I, 153 [<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G100054/index.html> (last accessed on March 4, 2014)]: 'Scríobhaidh gach aon do na Nua-Ghallaibh scríobhas ar Éirinn ... do brigh gurab é, Cambrens, is tarbh tána dhóibh le scríobhadh saoi-bh-sheanchusa ar Eirinn, ar an adhbhar nach fuil a mhalairt do threoraidhe aca'; ie 'Every one of the new Galls who writes on Ireland writes ... in imitation of Cambrensis because it is Cambrensis who is as the bull of the herd for them for writing the false history of Ireland, wherefore they had no choice of guide'.

⁵² Alfred P. Smyth, *Celtic Leinster. Towards an Historical Geography of Early Irish Civilization A. D. 500 – 1600* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1982), 41 and Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology*, 34–35, 95, 131.

⁵³ Ó Riain, "Pagan Example and Christian Practice: A Reconsideration" (see note 12), 154–56.

⁵⁴ Ptolemy (ca. C.E. 90 – ca. C.E. 168) mentions the tribe *Brigantes* who resided in Wexford. See Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: Batsford, 1973), 155.

enormously to the well-being and to the immense popularity achieved by the Christian Brigit. It would be very easy for her writers to use the image of the pagan goddess (fresh in the heart and minds of people) in order to re-create a Christian version thus allowing them to sway those same hearts and minds of the now Christianized Irish. But I feel that Brigit could only rely on the crest of that particular wave for a certain period of time—it was the role of her writers—to re-enforce, to remould and to re-invigorate thus allowing her popularity to flourish rather than flounder.

By definition, we have very little knowledge of the mythical Brigit. From *Sanas Cormaic*,⁵⁵ attributed to Cormac mac Cuileannáin (ca. 831–ca. 903/908), we find the following entry pertaining exclusively to the pagan Goddess Brigit:

Brigit .i. banfile ingen inDagdai. Iseiside Brigit banecas (no be neicsi) .i. Brigit bandee noadradís filid. Arba romor 7 baroán afrithgnam. Isairesin ideo eam (deam) vocant poetarum hoc nomine cūjus sorores errant Brigit be legis Brigit bé goibnechta .i. bandé .i. trihin-gena inDagdai insín. De quarum nominibus pene omnes Hibernenses dea Brigit vocabatur. Brigit din .i. breoaigit no breosaigit.

[Brigit i.e. a poetess, daughter of the Dagda. This is Brigit the female sage, or woman of wisdom, i.e. Brigit the goddess whom poets adored, because very great and very famous was her protecting care. It is therefore they call her goddess of poets by this name. Whose sisters were Brigit the female physician (woman of leechcraft), Brigit the female smith (woman of smithwork); from whose names with all Irishmen a goddess was called Brigit. Brigit, then, breo-aigit, breo-shaigit 'a fiery arrow'.]⁵⁶

At a cursory glance these are all traits attributed to Cogitosus' Saint Brigit—the poet, the seer; the sage; and the wise woman; her ability to care for the dying, the sick and the infirm; the art of healing (leech craft); the female smith (she who took care of animals) and lastly the name itself *Brigit* and her association with fire and light and arrow / direction. Following that entry is another—a simple short

55 Paul Russell, "The Sounds of a Silence: The Growth of Cormac's Glossary," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 15 (1988): 1–30; John Fraser, "A note on Cormac's Glossary," *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill .i. Tráchtas léigheanta i n-onóir do'n ollamhain Eóin Mac Néill, D. Litt. do scríobh cáirde d'á cháirdibh i n-am a dheichmhadh bliadhna agus trí fichid, an cúigmhadh lá déag de mhí na Bealtaine, 1938*, ed. John Ryan (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles), 37–41. See *Three Irish Glossaries. Cormac's Glossary Codex A (from a Manuscript in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy). O'Davoren's Glossary (from a Manuscript in the Library of the British Museum), and a Glossary to the Calendar of Oingus the Culdee (from a Manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin). With a Preface and Index*, ed. & trans. Whitley Stokes (London: Williams and Norgate 1862) s.a. 903.

56 Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries* (see note 58), 8; cf. *Sanas Chormaic: Cormac's Glossary*, trans. John O'Donovan (Calcutta: O. T. Cutter for the Irish Archaeological & Celtic Society, 1868), 23.

entry and again under the heading *Brigit: Brigit s.n. Sanct Brigit .i. naem Brigit indsín* [that is, St Brigit].⁵⁷ Cormac mac Cuileannáin believed them to be two separate people; one pagan and mythical; the other historical and Christian. More was needed to explain who the pagan Brigit was. It was self-evident to Cormac that all and sundry knew who Brigit was—there was only the one Brigit—or was it merely a clever device on his part?

Does this historical Brigit exist at all? The acknowledgement of her feast day (February 1) is not very old nor is the celebration of St. Brigit's Day in its present incarnation very old. What can we glean from these sources which could shed some light on the historical existence of Saint Brigit? There is nothing available in the extant lives which could support the existence of an historical figure.⁵⁸ Indeed one could argue that the very 'paganistic' nature of the lives themselves does not help her cause—born at sunrise, on the threshold, at Springtime and a druid suggesting she will be the exalted one, fed on a red-eared cow. There is very little personal detail to be gleaned from her biographers which could enable us to construct a biopic or a biography. Although the insights of Cogitosus are valuable they are worth very little in terms of gaining an insight to the historical figure. It is, on the other hand, extensive and even exhaustive on the mythological elements.

What does Cogitosus discuss in his *vita* of Brigit? Although scant on biographical material, he tells his readers/listeners that Brigit was of noble stock (as opposed to other lives which state she was the illegitimate daughter of a Leinster nobleman and his bondmaid Broicsech), and discusses the merits of the unisex monastery of Kildare. He explains to us that Conlaodh⁵⁹ (*archiepiscopus Hibernensium Episcoporum*) took charge of the monks; Brigit the nuns and along with another senior figure termed the *Praepositus*⁶⁰ that they in tandem spread the good word of the Lord amongst their people.

⁵⁷ Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries* (see note 58), 39.

⁵⁸ Although she does meet with Saint Patrick this could be seen as a clever propaganda tool on the part of her writers rather than arguing for her existence in her own right.

⁵⁹ See *The Book of Leinster formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, eds. Richard Irvine Best, Osborn Bergin, M. A. O'Brien and Anne O'Sullivan 6 vols. (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1953–1984), VI, [f. 348^a (ll. 46971–2), 1537], “. . . Tri primcherda Herenn .i. Tassach la Patric 7 Conlaed la Brigit 7 Daig la Cíaran 7 tri epscuip in sin” ie “. . . The three chief artisans of Ireland, to wit, Tassach with Patrick, and Conlaed with Brigit, and Daig with Ciarán; and those were three bishops.” Cf. Whitley Stokes, *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus The Culdee* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1905; rpt. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984), 186–7; Pádraig Ó Riain, *Corpus genealogiarum sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985), 13.

⁶⁰ Jean Michel Picard, “*Princeps* and *principatus* in the early Irish Church: a reassessment”, *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of*

Cogitosus's agenda and primary aim from start to finish is to highlight the great wealth of miracles enacted by Brigit. He follows the traditional route of the hagiographical genre and discusses the *topoi* one would expect in a saint's *vita*: her godliness and piety; her devoutness and her unstinting faith and belief; her special relationship with God; her chastity and purity; her holiness and sanctity; her great generosity and charity; her ascetic lifestyle and finally the importance of Kildare. Agriculture, livestock, dairying, and the general economics of the locality are touched upon; the schism between rich and poor, and the importance of nature and the elements are deliberated over. As is proper in the saint's *vita*, it is natural, customary and indeed the duty of the hagiographer to share with his brethren the miracles of Brigit: "Me cogitis, Fratres, ut sanctae ac beatae memoriae Brigidae Virginis virtutes et opera, more doctorum, memoriae litterisque tradere aggrediar."⁶¹ Cogitosus explains to his readership that the information accumulated is sound and that there is no doubting his sources.⁶² Alas, he does not divulge these sources to his modern readership.

Interestingly enough, Brigit does not travel great distances under Cogitosus—stepping foot outside Leinster merely once. This I believe does not show a lack of ambition on the part of Cogitosus, but rather an indication of his audience. Despite this, however, Brigit's fame has spread far and wide so much so that the monastery of Kildare is resplendent and basking in the riches of her faithful followers:

Et in veteri nova res nascitur actu: hoc est, Ecclesia crescente numero fidelium de utroque sexu, solo spatiosa, et in altum minaci proceritate porrecta ac decorate pictis tabulis, tria intrinsecus habens oratoria ampla et divisa parietibus tabulates sub uno culmine majoris domus. In qua unus paries decoratus, et imaginibus depictus, ac linteaminibus tectus per latitudinem in Orientali ecclesiae parte, a pariete ad alterum parietem ecclesiae se tendit. Qui un suis extremitatibus duo habet in se ostia, et per unum ostium in dextra parte positum intratur ad sanctuarium ad altare, ubi summus Pontifex eum sua regulari schola, et his qui

Francis J. Byrne, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 146–60.

⁶¹ See Seán Connolly and Jean-Michel Picard, "Cogitosus: Life of Saint Brigit," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 117 (1987), 5–27 here 11, §1: 'You compel me, brethren, to undertake to record in writing, after the fashion of learned men, the miracles and deeds of the virgin Brigit of holy and blessed memory'. Cf. Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis Studia: Latina Stockholmiensia*, XIII (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1964).

⁶² See Bollandus et al., "*Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitoso*," [see note 23], *Prologus auctoris*: " . . et ideo pauca de pluribus a majoribus ac peritissimis tradita, sine ulla ambiguitatis caligine"; Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus: Life of Saint Brigit," (see note 61), here 11, §2 " . . a few of the many things which have been handed down without any shadow of ambiguity by well-informed elders."

sacris deputati sunt mysteriis, sacra ac Dominica immolat sacrificia. Et per alterum ostium. In sinistra parte parietis supradicti et transverse positum, Abbatissa cum suis puellis et viduis fidelibus tantum intrat, ut convivio corporis et sanguinis fruantur Jesu Christi.

[“Thus, on account of the growing number of the faithful of both sexes, a new reality is born in an age-old setting, that is a church with its spacious site and its awesome height towering upwards. It is adorned with painted pictures and inside there are three chapels which are spacious and divided by board walls under the single roof of the cathedral church. The first of these walls, which is painted with pictures and covered with wall-hangings, stretches width wise in the east part of the church from one wall to the other. In it there are two doors, one at either end, and through the door situated on the right, one enters the sanctuary to the altar where the archbishop offers the Lord’s sacrifice together with his monastic chapter and those appointed to the sacred mysteries. Through the other door, situated on the left side of the aforesaid cross-wall, only the abbess and her nuns and faithful widows enter to partake of the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”]⁶³

This is a document by Kildare for Kildare. It is evident that Cogitosus wished to espouse the merits of Kildare as a place of worship, a place of pilgrimage, as a *locus sacer*, and of course as an exemplary monastery. He wished to exalt and extol the virtues of Kildare. This he does expertly and exactly. As McCone declared: “Viewed as a biography of Brigit, the work’s failings are egregious . . . if on the other hand, the life’s principal aim is taken to be the aggrandizement of Kildare, its structure suddenly becomes fully intelligible and Cogitosus is transformed from an incompetent author into a consummate propagandist.”⁶⁴ Cogitosus understood the fame and fortune that would await his monastery if a well-written and well-published *vita* took shape and in a sense he does achieve this. One need only look at the many copies of his work in manuscripts strewn across mainland Europe to realise that his primary aim was achieved.

Why were they written and what value do they hold for us today? It helped further increase and enhance the nature of piety and devoutness amongst the faithful; they offered a moral guidance in the hope that the faithful would follow suit—although ironically enough never actually achieve the exulted position of saintliness. One of the other primary aims of the Irish *vita sancti* was edification and to highlight the saint’s exemplary nature and virtues—as an exemplar of holiness, so that these traits would then impact upon the listeners and readers and act as guide and moral compass. They were written to maintain the saint’s memory, and in this way they would serve as appropriate reminders to the faithful who wished to imitate the saint’s way of life. Yet, as Herbert states: “the con-

⁶³ Bollandus et al., “*Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitosa*” (see note 23), 141 §37: 25 §32.

⁶⁴ Kim R. McCone, “Brigit in the Seventh Century: A Saint with Three Lives?,” *Peritia* 1 (1982): 107–45; here 109.

ventions of hagiography were sufficiently manipulable to allow the depiction of the saintly life to be molded by other concerns also. In fact, few Irish hagiographical compositions function solely as exemplary accounts of sanctity.” And what were these other concerns? If we therefore leave aside the miracles, information of a strictly biographical order is very meagre. It is therefore the aim of the hagiographer “to set forth prominently the tributes, privileges and rights of all kinds which the successor (*comarba*) of the saint who founded a monastery claims as his or her due throughout the entire extent of the *paruchia*; as well as the ties of confraternity, or of subordination, existing between the different monasteries of the *paruchia*.”⁶⁵ As well as that the lives offer us a window into the workings of a monastery and its community. As Herbert points out:

It speaks from within the monastic community of which its subject was patron, conveying the attitudes and interests of that community in the manner of its portrayal of the saint’s career. The hagiographical text thus bears an encoded message about the milieu in which it was compiled and received. To reveal the import of this message is to discover the concerns and claims being articulated within a particular monastic *familia* at a specific period in its history.⁶⁶

In conclusion, this extraordinary diverse collection of material illustrates the change, the growth, the development not only of the writers but also their audience—not only the mind-set and disposition of these writers in regard to the role and the importance they placed or envisioned for Saint Brigit from the seventh century onwards—but to the actual popularity of Saint Brigit herself. This material highlights how early Brigit’s cult was set in motion and recorded; its brave, bold even boastful beginnings, its growth and its development throughout the Middle Ages, its decline and its eventual rebirth via the folkloric material of the modern period. The early construction of Brigit is one of the most important, most remarkable and distinctive of any saint that existed in Ireland or in Britain in the early stages of Christianity due to the simple fact that there is not her like or her equal.

Although Saint Brigit enjoyed a short but intense period of popularity in literary sources and her legacy was firmly established, her fame was shortlived. Her status was on the wane while the status of Saint Patrick⁶⁷ was on the rise. Two centuries later, we find that she had been eclipsed by the supremacy of Patrick

⁶⁵ Joynt, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* (see note 14), 53–54.

⁶⁶ Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry. The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 2.

⁶⁷ Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 2], 319–56.

through the political manoeuvring of Armagh and the rise of the dynasty of the Northern Uí Néill. The church of Armagh began to flex their own considerable muscle to which Brigit's writers had no answer. As Stancliffe observed:

"So it was that in the seventh century the church of Armagh began using the figure of St Patrick in pursuit of its own far-reaching claims. Its success was partly due to the fact that there was already some recognition of Patrick's position elsewhere in Ireland: a hymn had been written in his honor, mentioning his 'apostolate from God', and likening him to St Peter and St Paul; again, he had been alluded to as *papa*, a term denoting considerable respect, by Cummin, writing in southern Ireland c.633; and clerics in the midlands had interested themselves in collecting stories about him."⁶⁸

Brigit had no answer to these claims. It is the *Liber Angeli*⁶⁹ (MS Trinity College Dublin 52, [*Liber Ardmachanus*])⁷⁰ written in Armagh (ca. 807) which declares Patrick as the apostle of the Irish, in which he is given the primatial rights and prerogatives of Armagh by an angel. He is " . . . sum esse apostolicus doctor et dux principalis omnibus Hibernionacum gentibus . . ."⁷¹ and it is Patrick who will be the judge of all of the Irish on doomsday.⁷² Armagh is the chosen see:

"Preest ergo quodam p(re)uilegio omnibus aeclessiis ac monasteriis cunctorum Hibernensium uel superna auctoritate summi pontificis illius fundatoris".

[“It therefore has precedence, by a certain privilege and by the heavenly authority of the supreme bishop, its founder, over all churches and monasteries of all the Irish.”]⁷³

In an appendix to the *Liber angeli*, (f. 21^b 1–22^a 1), it is claimed:

Inter sanctum Patricium Hibernensium Brigitamque co-lumpnas amicitia caritatis inerat tanta, ut unum cor consiliumque haberent unum. Christus per illum illamque uirtutes multas peregit. Vir ergo sanctus Christianae uirgini ait: “O mea Brigita, paruchia tua in

⁶⁸ See ODNB: (<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libgate.library.nuigalway.ie/view/article/21562?docPos=11> (last accessed on March 4, 2014).

⁶⁹ Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* [see note 9], 52–54, 184–191; Bieler, “The Celtic hagiographer”, [see note 21], 252; Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 9], 335–7; Richard Sharpe, “The Patrician documents in the Book of Armagh”, *Scriptorium* 36 (1982): 3–28.

⁷⁰ See <http://www.confessio.ie/manuscripts/dublin#1> (last accessed on March 4, 2014); Kenney, *The Sources* [see note 9], 337–39; Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: A Collection of Old-Irish Glosses Scholia Prose and Verse*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901 (vol. I); 1903 (vol. II); Supplement (1910), II, xiii–xvii; Wallace Martin Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule script* (Oxford: J. Parker and Co., 1910), 24–30.

⁷¹ Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* (see note 9), 186–87; “ . . . to be the apostolic teacher and chief leader for all the tribes of the Irish . . .”

⁷² Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* (see note 9), 188–89.

⁷³ Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* (see note 9), 186–87.

prouincia tua apud reputabitur monarchiam tuam, in parte autem orientali et occidentali dominatu in meo erit”.

[“Between holy Patrick and Brigit, pillars (dignitaries) of the Irish, there existed so great a friendship of charity that they were of one heart and one mind. Christ worked many miracles through him and her. The holy man, then, said, to the Christian virgin: “O my Brigit, your *paruchia* will be deemed to be in your province in your dominion, but in the eastern and western part it will be in my domination.”]74

This clearly references *paruchia Patrici* and the rights of both Brigit and Patrick to claim and generate revenue.⁷⁵ However, Brigit’s *paruchia* is that of Leinster—the power of Patrick will spread further afield—to the East and West. This is quite clearly a comedown from the audacious claims of Cogitosus (some two centuries earlier) on behalf of the monastery of Kildare where he ambitiously stated:

“. . . caput pene omnium Hibernensium Ecclesiarum, et culmen praecellens omnia monasteria Scottorum, cujus parochia per totam Hibernensem terram diffusa, a mari usque ad mare extensa est . . .”.

[“. . . It is the head of almost all the Irish Churches with supremacy over all the monasteries of the Irish and its paruchia extends over the whole land of Ireland, reaching from sea to sea . . .”.]76

Although Johnston argues that ‘the *Liber Angeli* . . . provides clear evidence for the shrinkage of Kildare ambitions’,⁷⁷ I don’t believe it to be the case. One must remember that this was Armagh exerting its power and rule over all other monasteries in Ireland. Such propaganda led to widespread recognition of St Patrick’s special status and this clearly had an effect. They had now come to the forefront. Brigit’s spell had now come to an end, had effectively run its course and it was now the turn of Saint Patrick to assume the mantle and to expound the virtues and the merits of Ireland’s Christendom.

74 Bieler and Kelly, *The Patrician Texts* (see note 9), 190–191.

75 Bieler, “The Celtic hagiographer,” (see note 21), 252.

76 Bollandus et al., “*Vita II Auctore, ut Creditur, Cogitoso*,” [see note 23], §2 135 (trans. Connolly and Picard, “Cogitosus: Life of Saint Brigit,” (see note 61), §4 11.

77 Elva Johnston, “The Other Sex: Images of Women in Irish Hagiography” (unpublished M.A. thesis, University College Cork, 1994), 29.

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A Prince Under the Spell of the Devil? The Outburst of Charles the Fat in 873 C.E.

I Introduction

In the ninth century wars and conflicts dominated the political life of the Frankish Empire. Besides problems with external enemies like the Normans and the Saracens, the struggle for power within the royal family characterized the epoch of the Carolingian dynasty. With the “Bruderkriege” between the years 840 and 843, the conflicts reached their climax and were brought to an end by the treaty of Verdun. Although the treaty resulted in a division of the realm into East, West, and Middle Francia—which was an important step in the creation of modern Europe—the fighting continued because nobody was satisfied with the received portion and the struggle for more power continued. In addition the Carolingian kings of East and West Francia also experienced problems within their own territories. Not only did they have to deal with rulers in other parts of the realm, but also with their own sons, who repeatedly tried to emancipate themselves from their fathers and started one rebellion after another. This was especially challenging for Louis the German in the East Frankish Empire, who had three legitimate heirs: Carloman, Louis the Younger, and Charles the Fat.

Starting in the 850s, Carloman began to revolt repeatedly with the aim of receiving a larger territory. After a temporary reconciliation, Louis the German even had to detain his son to stop his rebellions. The situation could only be stabilized after an official announcement calling for a division of the East Frankish kingdom. Unfortunately it favored Carloman, which made the two younger sons jealous, who subsequently rose up against their father. In 866 Louis the Younger revolted, but was quickly pacified. Then in 871 he rebelled again, but this time he had the support of Charles the Fat and a great number of followers. During a meeting in March 872, it seemed that Louis the German had finally achieved peace with his sons, but this reconciliation was only superficial, a political compromise that was established between King Louis the German and Carloman on one side, and Louis the Younger and Charles the Fat on the other.¹

¹ Rudolf Schieffer, *Die Karolinger* (Stuttgart, Berlin, and Cologne: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2006), 157. For general information on the politics of the East Frankish Empire and the relationship be-

After the king celebrated Christmas in 872 in Frankfurt, he held an assembly there on the 26th of January, 873, where he wanted to discuss the situation of the realm and the family affairs. Meanwhile, his sons Louis and Charles, who were also present, allegedly planned a conspiracy against their father. Nevertheless, the situation of the realm could not be discussed, nor could the heirs fulfil their evil plan, because another event dominated the assembly which attracted the attention of the present audience. Charles the Fat, the youngest of the sons who had only recently taken part in the intrigues and conflicts within the East Frankish realm, suffered a public outburst. This outburst not only shocked the contemporaries, but has also posed a conundrum for medievalists for more than a thousand years.

II The Outburst

Three sources reported about the unusual and shocking incident: the *Annals of St. Bertin*,² written by the archbishop Hincmar of Reims, the *Annals of Fulda*,³ the spatial counterpart of the *Annals of St. Bertin*, which were created by an anonymous author in the cathedral of Mainz, and lastly the *Annals of Xanten*,⁴ also written by an anonymous author under the archbishop of Cologne.

tween Louis the German and his sons, see also: *The Carolingian World*, ed. Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*. Studies in Medieval History, 9 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957); Eric J. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876*. Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Wilfried Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*. Gestalten das Mittelalters und der Renaissance (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002); id., “Die Söhne König Ludwig des Deutschen: König Karlmann, König Ludwig der Jüngere (III.), Kaiser Karl III.,” *Die Kaiser: 1200 Jahre europäische Geschichte*, ed. Gerhard Hartmann and Karl Schnith (Graz: Styria, 1996), 71–81; Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); François Louis Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971); Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800–1056* (New York: Longman, 1991).

2 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard and Suzanne Clémencet. *Annales de Saint-Bertin* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1964), 190–92.

3 *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 873, ed. Friedrich Kurze. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, 7 (Hanover: Hahn, 1891), 77–78.

4 *Annales Xantenses et Annales Vedastini*, s.a. 873, ed. Bernhard von Simson. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, 12 (Hanover: Hahn, 1909), 31–32.

Hincmar reported on Charles's outburst as follows: while Louis stayed in the palatinate of Frankfurt, the Devil came to his son in the form of an angel and told him that his father, who wanted to ruin him in favor of Carloman, engendered the wrath of God against him and he would soon lose his realm. But God had decided that Charles should possess the kingdom and that it would soon fall to him. Charles, gripped by fear and horror, hurried into the church where the Devil followed him inside and said, "Why are you afraid and fleeing, because if I wasn't sent by God, I could not follow you into this house of the Lord." By these and other tempting words he persuaded the same to take the Communion through his hands. As Charles came to his father and held council with his brother and other faithful followers, bishops as well as laymen, suddenly he got up, possessed by the Devil, and declared that he wished to renounce the secular world and that he never had sexual intercourse with his wife.

While doing so, he dropped his sword and let it fall to the ground, and because he also wanted to remove the baldric and his clothes, he began to shake with his whole body. So he was grabbed by the bishops and other men and led into the church. The Archbishop Liutbert got dressed with his vestment and began to read the mass. As he came to the part where the Gospel was read, Charles began to scream with a loud voice "woe, woe," and he continued to scream this "woe" until the mass was over. Then the father handed him over to the bishops and other followers, and commanded that he should be taken around the shrines of the martyrs, so that he could get rid of the Devil through their earnings and their intercessions and that he could regain his healthy senses through the mercy of God. After that he thought of sending him to Rome, but gave up this plan because other factors intervened.⁵

5 Translation by author, original in *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873, ed. Grat (see note 2), 190–92: "Hludowicus Germaniae rex ante nativitatem Domini ad Franconofurth palatium venit ibique nativitatem Domini celebravit et placitum suum ibidem circa kalendas Februarii condixit, quo filios suos Hludowicum et Karolum cum aliis suis fidelibus, homines quoque qui de regno quondam Hlotharii illi se commandaverunt convenire praecepit. Et dum ibi degeret, venit ad Karolum filium eius diabolus transfigurans se in angelum lucis, et dixit illi quod pater eius, qui illum causa Karlomanni fratris sui perdere moliebatur, Deum offensum haberet et regnum in brevi amitteret, et eidem Karolo Deus illud regnum habendum dispositum haberet, quod in proximo optineret. Ipse autem Karolus timore perterritus, quia domui in qua latebat adherebat, ecclesiam est ingressus; quo eum diabolus est insecutus. Cui iterum dixit: 'Cur times et fugis? Nam, nisi ex Deo venissem tibi adnuntians quae in proximo sunt futura, in hanc domum Domini te sequens non intrarem.' His et aliis blanditiis ei persuasit ut communionem a Deo sibi missam de manu illius acciperet, sicut et fecit. Et post buccellam ipse Satanus intravit in eum. Veniens autem ad patrem suum, et residens in consilio eius cum fratre et aliis fidelibus, tam episcopis quam et laicis, subito invasus surrexit et dixit quia seculum vellet dimittere, et quia uxorem suam carnali

According to the *Annals of Fulda*, the king came together with his followers in January to hold an assembly in Frankfurt. During this assembly the kindness of the King was marvellously emphasized and the malice of some, who sought to take his life, was revealed. As Louis entered the hall in the presence of his nobles, the bishops and the counts, the Evil One took possession of his youngest son Charles and tormented him so violently that six of the strongest men were needed to hold him. He who tried to deceive the God-anointed king was fooled himself, and he who tried deceptively to bring his father down was brought down by the Devil, so that he could see through the diabolic agony, that God's will was not to destroy. The king and all the present audience shed tears of intense sorrow, and as he was led into the church so that the bishops could beg the Lord for his recovery, he cried quietly at first and soon with a loud voice, threatening to bite those holding him with open mouth. That is why the king spoke to his son of the same name: "You see, oh son, whom you are serving, you and your brother, if you try to cause mischief against me? So confess your crimes and regret them and beg to God humbly, that they will be remitted. Me too, I will forgive you." However, as the attack of the Devil came to an end, Charles told the audience that he was possessed by the Devil, as he often planned conspiracies against his father.⁶

commertio non contingeret; et, discingens se spata, cadere in terram illam permisit; et cum se vellet balteo discingere et vestimento exuere, coepit vexari. Comprahensus autem ab episcopis et ab aliis viris, turbato patre et omnibus qui adfuerunt vehementique stupore percussis, ductus est in ecclesiam. Et Liubertus archiepiscopus induens se sacerdotalibus vestibus missam cantare coepit, cumque ventam fuisset ad locum euangelii coepit, magnis vocibus patria lingua 'vae' clamare, et sic continuis vocibus 'vae' illud clamavit, usque dum missa caelebrata fuit. Quem pater eius episcopis et aliis fidelibus committens, per sacra loca sanctorum martyrum deduci praecepit, quatenus illorum meritis et orationibus a daemone liberatus ad sanam mentem, Domino miserante, redire praevaleret. Deinde disposuit illum Romam dirigere, sed quibusdam intervenientibus causis, iter illud dimisit."

6 Translation by author, original in *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 873, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 77-78: "Mense vero Ianuario cum suis undique convenientibus de statu regni sui et utilitate in loco supradicto placitum habere disposuit; ibique Domino faciente eius bonitas magnifice demonstrata est et quorundam malitia illi insidiantium denudata. Nam cum VII. Kal. Februar, curiam introisset, in praesentia illius et optimatum suorum, episcoporum videlicet atque comitum, malignus spiritus Karolum filium eius minimum invasit et graviter vexavit, ita ut a sex viris fortissimis vix teneri potuisset; et quidem satis iuste. Qui enim regem a Deo electum et ordinatum decipere voluit, deceptus est, qui patri suo insidiosae laqueos tendere consiliatus est, ispe in laqueos incidit diaboli, quatenus ex ipsa vexatione diabolica disceret non esse consilium contra Deum. Rex autem et omnes, qui cum illo erant, vehementer contristati lacrimas fuderunt. Cumque duceretur ad ecclesiam, ut episcopi pro eius sanitate Domino supplicarent, nunc exili nunc grandi voce clamitans morsum se tenetibus aperto ore minabatur. Conversus itaque rex ad aequivocum suum ait: 'Videsne, o fili, cuius domino vos mancipatis, tu et frater tuus, quando contra me aliq-

The *Annals of Xanten* generally support the reports of the other two sources. The author states that at the assembly in Frankfurt, two of the sons of Louis the German—Louis and Charles—wanted to create a tyranny, to dethrone the king, and to send him to prison. But God, the just and patient judge, revealed a major miracle in public: the Evil One took possession of Charles in front of the present audience and tormented him horribly with discordant cries. The same day he was exorcised by the appeals and prayers of different priests. After seeing what had happened to his brother, Louis the Younger threw himself to the feet of his father, confessed the crimes he had committed, and requested forgiveness. The father settled the matter wisely and with consideration.⁷

We may assume that these contemporary and detailed texts were based on independent eyewitness accounts. Without a doubt, representatives of the churches of Mainz and Cologne were present at the assembly. Furthermore, we can suspect that Hincmar of Reims was in direct contact with Louis the German, since his diocese cultivated relationships with the East Frankish kingdom. Therefore all three reports have to be taken seriously.⁸ Clearly, the reports are different in terms of details, but identical in terms of the main points, namely Charles's physical behavior, his words and his actions. The difference between the descriptions lies in the evaluation, how far the protagonists are to be blamed for the events, whether it concerns Louis the German, Charles the Fat, or even the Devil in person.

uid sinistrum machinari cogitatis? Modo intellegere poteris, si antes noluisti, quod iuxta veritatis sententiam *nihil opertum est, quod non reveletur*. Confitere ergo peccata tua et age poenitentiam et Deum humiliter postula, ut tibi relaxentur. Ego etiam, quantum in me est, tibi indulgentiam tribuo.' Idem vero Karolus post sedatam infestationem diaboli viva voce multis audientibus retulit se totiens adversae potestati traditum, quotiens contra regem conspirationem inisset."

7 Translation by author, original in *Annales Xantenses*, s.a. 873, ed. v. Simson (see note 4), 31–32: "Ludewicus rex orientalis placitum publicum episcoporum ac laicorum ad Vadum-Francorum celebravit. Ibique venerunt contra eum duo filii eius, *pleni inique cogitatione*, convocus et Karolus, tirannidem moliri et iuramenta priorum postponere, patrem regno privari et in custodiam mittere. Sed *Deus, iustus iudex et patiens*, grande miraculum palam omnibus ibidem monstravit, ita et malignus spiritus videntibus cunctis Karolum invasit eumque horribiliter discrepantibus vocibus agitavit. Sed in eodem die orationum suffragiis et coniurationibus diversorum sacerdotum eiectus est. Viso hoc terrore frater senior pedibus patris provolutus commissum nefandum profitetur, indulgentiam postulans. Pater vero pius haec omnia prudentur cum moderamine disposuit."

8 Simon MacLean, "Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning: Representations of Disrupted Royal Assembly at Frankfurt (873)," *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany, 800–1500*, ed. Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean. International Medieval Research, 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 97–119; here 101.

Hincmar of Reims strongly emphasizes the role of the Devil and does not judge Charles as a perpetrator, but as a victim who was seduced by the Devil and then became possessed by him.⁹ In addition neither did he mention the conspiracy, which the other two sources pointed out as the main reason for the possession, nor the participation of Louis the Younger during the event. Instead he indirectly accuses Louis the German, who wanted to favor his eldest son and provoked such a situation. Hincmar's position is hardly surprising, if one keeps in mind that he was one of the most powerful men of the West Frankish Empire, a follower of Charles the Bald who was the half-brother of Louis the German and in fierce competition with him over the rule of all of Francia.¹⁰ The author of the *Annals of Fulda* describes the story in a different way. Because he drew up the chronicle in the name of Louis the German, he stresses the guilt of Charles the Fat and of Louis the Younger. He emphasizes that Charles publicly confessed that they had planned a conspiracy against his father, even though he blamed the Devil for his actions.¹¹ The author strongly condemns Charles's behavior and uses his outburst and this episode as a warning to the king's opponents not to rebel, nor to conspire against the king, because everybody could see that Charles's acting was a consequence of such attempts. Obviously this passage was not addressed to external enemies in the 870s, but to the other Carolingian family members. The *Annals of Xanten* speak clearly of a conspiracy of the two brothers against the king with the objective of dethroning him. The author condemns Charles and Louis as oath-breakers, while hardly mentioning the role of the Devil.¹²

All sources pointed out that Charles's behavior was a consequence of a demonic or satanic possession caused by the rebellion, which the prince and his brother had been engaged in periodically over the previous two years, and apparently planned to resume.¹³ This interpretation of the events of the contemporary

9 Achim Thomas Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter: Das Beispiel der Karolinger*. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 56 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2009), 177.

10 For an overview of the conflicts between Louis the German and Charles the Bald, see: Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1); Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (see note 1); Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, New York: Longman, 1992); Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages* (see note 1); Schieffer, *Karolinger* (see note 1).

11 Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (see note 1), 73.

12 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 101.

13 Ulrich Helfenstein, *Beiträge zur Problematik der Lebensalter in der mittleren Geschichte*. Wissenschaft, Gesellschaft, Staat 6 (Zurich: Europa Verlag, 1952), 57: “. . . für alles dämonisch und heidnisch Umwitterte hatte im christlichen Mittelalter der Teufel den Namen herzugeben” (“. . . for anything that appeared demonic or pagan in the Christian Middle Ages, the Devil was used as explanation”).

people is no surprise, because it seemed that nothing else could lead to the revolt of a son against his own father, other than the interference of the Devil. All conspiracies against the king were regarded as unforgivable sins, which could result in the death of the instigator, and not even the king's son was excluded from such a punishment.

Although people in the ninth-century accepted diabolical influence as an explanation for Charles's shocking behavior, the modern historian understandably searches for a more nuanced interpretation. Therefore the episode from 873 forms an object of interest from the end of the nineteenth century and over the years, three different models were formulated, which I would like to present and critically examine in the following.

III Epileptic Fit

The most popular evaluation of Charles's outburst was introduced in the nineteenth century by Ernst Dümmler.¹⁴ In a short passage about Charles's state of health, he stated that the prince had been afflicted by physical sickness in recent years.¹⁵ In the following century this idea reached its high point with the assumption that Charles had been sick and weak from birth, suffering from a hereditary illness: epilepsy.¹⁶ The outburst in 873 was therefore interpreted as an epileptic fit. The idea of a "hereditary disease" which was prevalent within the East Frankish Carolingian family was developed by historians who can be traced back to the precursors of the National Socialism during the 1930s.¹⁷ The medical researcher Hans Werner Becker referred to the commonly cited theory of a hereditary illness within the Carolingian family in an article published in 1937. He was certain that early arteriosclerosis recurred in several generations.¹⁸ Queen Emma, the wife of

¹⁴ See Ernst Dümmler, *Geschichte des Ostfränkischen Reiches I-III*. Jahrbücher der deutschen Geschichte, 7 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1887–1888).

¹⁵ Dümmler, *Geschichte des Ostfränkischen Reiches III* (see note 14), 290.

¹⁶ This interpretation was advanced by Werner Heinz Becker in his "Zur Erbkrankheit der Karolinger," *Die medizinische Welt* 11 (1937): 808–09. Nowadays it is supported by Brigitte Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica Schriften, 44 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1997), 536; as well as by Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (see note 1), 73.

¹⁷ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 11.

¹⁸ Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 809: "Da erweist es sich für den Arzt bald, daß frühzeitige Arteriosklerose in mehreren Generationen wiederkehrt" ("For the doctor it became obvious that arteriosclerosis reoccurs in several generations").

Louis the German, was identified as the origin of this disease. Before she died she suffered sudden paralysis and could not speak.¹⁹ Carloman, too, was paralysed, lost his ability to speak, and lived a shadowy existence, while, according to Becker, Louis the Younger died of an infectious disease and Charles the Fat was an epileptic who distinguished himself and his regency through low energy, dishonourable treaties, increasing imbecility and occasional violence.²⁰ Moreover, an operation on the head in 887²¹ provided Becker evidence of Charles the Fat suffering from long-term illness.²² Furthermore, he argued that all sons of Emma died relatively young and allegedly childless, which also marked an important point in favor of a hereditary disease. The deaths of the grandsons of Louis the German also served to strengthen this theory.²³ Becker wrote that all Carolingians, including Charles the Fat, who did not die prematurely from the external effects of violence suffered from arteriosclerosis, which finally lead to their deaths.²⁴

Besides a physical illness, he also categorized an inherited character, that is to say, a fault in character that emerged amongst others in the form of callousness and ethical inferiority, adultery and greed, and manifested itself through an aggressive rivalry between relatives and the assassination of rivals.²⁵ But, as already mentioned, Becker belonged to the forerunners of the National Socialism, who saw a weakness of the German nation in the decline of the Carolingian Empire.²⁶ Therefore this condemnation of the character of the East Frankish rulers is not surprising.

Becker's view was supported by the historian Heinz Zatschek.²⁷ He too diagnosed a stenosis of the arteries as a hereditary disease within the Carolingian

¹⁹ Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 808.

²⁰ Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 808: "die geringe Tatkraft, die Abschließung unwürdiger Verträge, die Indolenz gegenüber dem Zerfall des Reiches" ("low drive, signing unworthy contracts, indolence toward the decline of the realm"), "zunehmende Geistesschwäche" ("increasing imbecility"), "gelegentliche Gewalttätigkeit" ("occasional violence").

²¹ *Annales Fuldenses (Continuatio Ratisbonenses)*, s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 115: "Imperator Elisacia magna infirmitate adgravantur. Postea parum convalescens ad Alemanniam proficiscitur, vergens curtem Podoman pro dolore capitis incisionem accepit" (The emperor was infected by a very intense disease in the Alsace. Afterwards, not yet entirely recovered, he traveled to Alemannia, where an incision was made on his head because he was in pain").

²² Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 7.

²³ For further information regarding the Carolingian cases of death, see Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 7. Cf. also the general overview in Schieffer, *Karolinger* (see note 1).

²⁴ Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 809.

²⁵ Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 809.

²⁶ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 9.

²⁷ Heinz Zatschek, *Wie das erste Reich der Deutschen entstand: Staatsführung, Reichsgut und*

dynasty, which was brought into the family by Queen Emma, but he excluded inferiority of character.²⁸ This is possibly due to the fact that the expansionary policy of the Third Reich during the 1940s towards the East became more and more aggressive. Therefore Louis the German and his grandson Arnulf could not have been flawed with an imputation, since they also showed attempts to expand their territory eastwards. Based on this fact, some military actions of the Carolingians even were used to legitimize the attempts of expansion of the National Socialism regime.²⁹

Through his statement that all hereditary diseases within the Carolingian family originated from the wives of the Frankish kings, Zatschek also exonerated the men of the family from the defect of a hereditary illness.³⁰ These women were daughters of Frankish noblemen, who also had several other children with the same genetic prerequisite. As the Frankish gentry predominantly like to marry their children among their own kind, if Zatschek's assertion were true, the whole Frankish elite would have consequently suffered from hereditary illness.³¹ As criterion for the health of a ruler he also take his age and the number of his children. That's why he claimed, e.g., for Arnulf, that not only his fertility was reduced because of an illness, but also his age.³² As the main cause for the deaths of the Carolingians, he identified also a hereditary illness, although he did not provide any evidence for this assumption. He even included two Carolingians in this list who died from accidents.³³ In general, genetics seemed to have been for him an important reason for the decline of the Frankish kingdom. In the course of his arguments it formed a very important part of his work and explained the political failure of the Carolingians.³⁴

Ostsiedlung im Zeitalter der Karolinger. Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte, 16 (Prague: Verlag der Deutschen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften und Künste, 1940), 296–303.

28 Zatschek, *Reich der Deutschen* (see note 27), 303.

29 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 12.

30 Zatschek, *Reich der Deutschen* (see note 27), 302.

31 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 13.

32 Zatschek, *Reich der Deutschen* (see note 27), 298–99: “Schon dieses Beispiel zeigt überaus deutlich, wie unter dem Einwirken von Krankheiten nicht nur die Zeugungsfähigkeit herabgesetzt ist, sondern auch Lebenszeit immer kürzer wird.” (“This example shows clearly, how through the influence of diseases not only the fertility but also lifetime was reduced.”)

33 Zatschek, *Reich der Deutschen* (see note 27), 301. This fact was concealed by the author. Instead, he only added that the sons of Louis the Stammerer would have died anyway in early years: “Aber man wird . . . doch damit zu rechnen haben, daß die Söhne Ludwigs des Stammers aus erster Ehe auch ohne diese Unfälle nicht alt geworden wären.”

34 Zatschek, *Reich der Deutschen* (see note 27), 297.

Both Becker and Zatschek agreed that illness is no temporary condition but a crucial, personal attribute. The disease they considered causes impotence, measured by the number of children that a ruler has, and an early death, rated by his age. These measurements however, are applied to the conditions of modern times, and not to the Middle Ages. This illness leads to a general inability to perform, which was supported by the alleged inefficacy of the Carolingian kings. Becker and Zatschek offered in their approaches the contemplation that the decline of the Frankish empire was a direct result of the hereditary incompetence of the Carolingians.³⁵

At the end of the nineteenth century Ferdinand Lot disagreed with the idea of a hereditary disease³⁶ and during the last decades of the twentieth century the arguments of Becker and Zatschek were predominantly refuted.³⁷ After intensive work with the sources, e. g., Thomas Hack revealed that despite the numerous deaths caused by illness among the Carolingians, only seldom were the same symptoms described in this context. Only Carloman and his illegitimate son Arnulf showed the same characteristics as Emma, while Louis the Younger and Charles the Fat suffered from other maladies. Hence it seems a little hasty to act on the assumption of a hereditary disease, if in such a big family only three members showed the same symptoms.³⁸ An important argument for Becker was the age structure of the Carolingians. But Charlemagne lived to be 72 years old and Louis the Pious lived 62 years, Carloman reached 51, his son Arnulf 49, Charles the Fat under 50, and Louis the Younger only 52 years.³⁹ An average of fifty years for a ruler was a considerable age during the early Middle Ages and Charlemagne and Louis the Pious lived even longer, maybe because these rulers had the fortune of gaining exclusive control of the realm quite early, while their heirs had to deal with internal enemies their whole lives in order to secure their territories. The

35 See Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 16–17 as well as 15, note 75, where he lists some examinations, which deal with this subject, e.g., Ernst Klee, *Deutsche Medizin im Dritten Reich: Karrieren vor und nach 1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 2001), and Ota Konrád, “Geisteswissenschaften an der Deutschen Universität in Prag (1938/39–1945),” *Universitäten und Hochschulen im Nationalsozialismus und in der frühen Nachkriegszeit*, ed. Karen Bayer and Frank Sparing and Wolfgang Woelk. Geschichte (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), 219–48.

36 Ferdinand Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens: Lothaire, Louis V, Charles de Lorraine 954–991*. Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études: Sciences philologiques et historiques, 87 (Paris: É. Bouillon, 1891), 185 and 293–97.

37 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9). This reappraisal from the medical point of view was also carried out by Hans J. Oesterle, “Die sogenannte Kopfoperation Karls III. 887,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 61 (1979): 445–51.

38 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 8.

39 Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 809.

Carolingian heirs were furthermore not childless. Carloman had at least one illegitimate son, as well as Charles the Fat, and Arnulf had three sons and a daughter, which were as many as other Carolingians from the eighth century, who, according to Zatschek, were completely healthy.⁴⁰ And finally Queen Emma can be excluded as the source of infection of a possible hereditary disease, because she lived relatively long and was a member of the family of the Guelfs, who were a long-lasting, tough and healthy dynasty.⁴¹

It seems that in fact there has been an accumulation of apoplexy and aphasia in the East Frankish family—as assumed for Emma, Carloman and Arnulf—but this should not lead to the misinterpretation that the same disease pattern also appeared in cases of all Carolingians⁴², as was done in the modern literature. For instance, Rudolf Schieffer wrote in his standard reference on the history of the Carolingians that the same symptoms which caused the death of Louis the Younger could also be observed in the case of Carloman.⁴³ But the *Annals of St. Bertin* reported only about a short-term, unspecified physical illness in the year 880 and then again, in 882, about a disease which eventually lead to the death of the king.⁴⁴ In addition, both the *Annals of Fulda*⁴⁵ as well as Regino of Prüm⁴⁶ described a heavy suffering in this context, but neither specified on the

⁴⁰ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 13.

⁴¹ For an overview of the early history of the Guelfs, cf. Bernd Schneidmüller, *Die Welfen: Herrschaft und Erinnerung (819–1252)*. Kohlhammer Urban-Taschenbücher, 465 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 40–72.

⁴² Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 165–66.

⁴³ Schieffer, *Karolinger* (see note 1), 179. This argument does not reflect the information given by the sources.

⁴⁴ *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 882, ed. Grat (see note 2), 246: “Et ipse ultra Sequanam, acsi recepturus Brittonum principes et bellaturus contra Nortmannos, usque Turonis perrexit, ubi infirmatus est corpore, et lectica deportatus usque ad monasterium Sancti Dyonisii, mense augusto ibi mortuus est et sepultus” (“He himself traveled over the Seine with the intention of welcoming the princes of Brittany and campaigning against the Normans and came to Tours. Here he became ill and was brought to St-Denis, where he died and was buried in August”).

⁴⁵ *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 881, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 97: “Rex apud Franconofurt gravi infirmitate laborabat et, quia ipse non potuit, exercitum suum contra Nordmannis destinavit” (The king suffered from a heavy disease in Frankfurt and because he was unable to do so, he sent his army against the Normans”), and s.a. 882, 97: “Nam Hludowicus invalescente morbo XIII. Kal. eiusdem mensis diem ultimum clausit” (“Louis died, because his disease increased, on January 20”).

⁴⁶ *Reginonis Chronicon*, s.a. 882, ed. Friedrich Kurze. Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 50 (Hanover: Hahn, 1890), 118: “Dum haec aguntur, Ludowicus rex morbo gravatus apud Franconofurt moritur XIII. Kal. Febr. sepultusque est iuxta patrem in Lorasham coenobio” (“While this was occurring, King Louis died

actual illness. Thus the sources do not mention any symptoms that appeared in the case of Carloman. Since the same annalists reported on the characteristics of his malady, we can assume that they would have described the same symptoms in the case of Louis if he suffered from the same illness.⁴⁷

Charles the Fat was often misjudged in the same way.⁴⁸ In a 1999 article Gunther Wolf argued that the prince suffered from apparent apoplexy, just as his mother and his brother.⁴⁹ But Wolf did not explain how he came to this conclusion, since the sources do not point in such a direction. Although Charles the Fat was often ill in the last years of his life, a description of the same symptoms that Carloman and Emma showed are still missing.⁵⁰ But Wolf continued with his diagnosis and linked Charles's "epileptic fit" with a hereditary disease.⁵¹ The author did not explain, how the accumulation of strokes in the East Frankish family points to an epileptic fit. In general modern medicine controversially discusses whether strokes are at all hereditary, which was simply a common assumption among earlier historical research.⁵²

The sources allocate only some symptoms for Emma, Carloman and his illegitimate son Arnulf, which indicate apoplexy and aphasia and suggest that these family members died of strokes. The annalists provide no evidence that Charles the Fat also suffered from the same disease. His outburst in 873 is nevertheless always mentioned in the context of such a hereditary disease. It is interpreted as a metaphor for a mental and physical illness, in particular by using the vocabulary of mental disorder, epilepsy, and sickness.⁵³

of a disease from which he suffered in Frankfurt on January 20 und was buried besides his father in the monastery Lorsch").

⁴⁷ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 167.

⁴⁸ Timothy Reuter, "Der Uota-Prozeß," *Kaiser Arnolf: Das ostfränkische Reich am Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts. Regensburger Kolloquium 9.-11.12.1999*, ed. Franz Fuchs and Peter Schmidt. Zeitschrift für Bayrische Landesgeschichte, Beiheft 19, Reihe B (Munich: Beck, 2002), 253-70; here 265: "... schon seine Großmutter Hemma und sein Vater Karlmann waren nach Schlaganfällen gestorben; ähnliches lässt sich für seinen Onkel Karl III. vermuten, während wir über die letzte Krankheit Ludwigs des Jüngere nichts sicheres wissen ..." ("... his grandmother Emma and his father Carloman had already died of strokes; something similar can be assumed for his uncle Charles III., while we are not certain about the last disease of Louis the Younger ...").

⁴⁹ Gunther G. Wolf, "Die Operation Kaiser Karls III. 887," *Archiv für Diplomatik* XLV (1999): 15-19: "eine offenbare Apoplexie," "wohl erbliche Krankheit."

⁵⁰ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 167.

⁵¹ Wolf, *Operation* (see note 50), 15.

⁵² See, for further information, Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 167, where he summarizes the modern medical research regarding the heredity nature of strokes.

⁵³ MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 102: "... mod-

Partly due to this outburst, historians traditionally have dismissed Charles III as an incompetent, weak, and epileptic prince who represented the alleged decline of the Carolingian monarchy.⁵⁴ This image has been compounded by his cognomen “the Fat,” which he was given at first by the Dominican Martin of Troppau, who called him “Karolus Grossus” in 1278 in his *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*. But the contemporary chroniclers do not describe him as unusually corpulent. Reportedly he was tall, blonde and extraordinarily strong.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Brigitte Kasten, for example, implies for Charles not only epilepsy, but also characterizes him as the weakest son of Louis the German.⁵⁶ In her monograph about Carolingian princes she emphasizes that in 858, as King Louis assigned to his sons military duties to secure the borders of the realm, Charles—with his nineteen years—was the only one without assignment.⁵⁷ At representative acts, he was also ignored, as for example in October in Regensburg, where the sources reported the presence of the seventeen years old Carloman and the twelve years old Louis, but not Charles.⁵⁸ And although Charles received two counties, the Breißgau and the Bertholdsbaar, and obtained the duchy of Alemania at the age of twenty, Kasten still presents him as a figure who merely made an appearance.⁵⁹

Considering military duty, it seems that his father did not trust him enough, because he “was forced” in 869 to put Charles in front of his army against the

ern historians have almost interpreted the annalists’ language of possession as a metaphor for mental and physical illness on Charles’s part.” See, therefore, Becker, *Zur Erbkrankheit* (see note 16), 808–09. Cf. also Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 536: “. . . am 23. Januar erlitt Karl der Dicke in aller Öffentlichkeit in der curia einen so schlimmen epileptischen Anfall, dass ihn sechs Männer kaum hätten halten können.” (“. . . on January 23, Charles the Fat suffered such a bad epileptic fit in public that six men could hardly hold him”); Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (see note 1), 73, and Karl Leyser, “Early Medieval Canon Law and the Beginning of Knighthood,” *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe*, vol. I: *The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London: Hambledon, 1994), 51–71; here 66–67, where he himself confessed that he was unsure about how to classify the incident.

54 Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 315.

55 Notkeri Balbuli, *Gesta Karoli Magni Imperatoris*, ed. Hans F. Haefele. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, Nova series, 12 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), 47, and compare Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 316.

56 Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 536 and 543.

57 *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 858, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 49.

58 *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 852, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 42–43. See Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 498–501.

59 Compare Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 508 and 519. She also emphasizes, that the 27-year old Charles was in the beginning not involved in the conflicts and rebellions within the East Frankish realm and that strangely enough he emerges very rarely in contemporary sources.

Moravians, and had to entrust the outcome to God, as he himself was ill.⁶⁰ Consequently, Charles was given his first military task by accident, when he was already thirty years old. The fact that he was successful is mentioned only in passing. After the division of the kingdom in 872, Charles received, despite his alleged position as a weakling of the family, the regions Alemannia, Raetia, and Churraetia, where he could demand the oath of fealty.⁶¹

Brigitte Kasten claims that prior to his revolt in 872 and 873 Charles was very rarely mentioned in public records and that after his epileptic fit he was almost completely excluded politically.⁶² Although Charles received the same tasks and de facto treatment as his brothers, Kasten still emphasizes that after 873 he was so weak that the others could pass over him.⁶³

But not only the sources contradict this assumption, also Kasten herself mentions that although Louis and Charles stayed in their father's proximity after the outburst, he entrusted them with the responsibility of ruling over the court during his journeys.⁶⁴ Charles's position as *missus* for his father in 874, when he had to establish an agreement for a meeting with his uncle Charles the Bald, as well as his title as king, which he was granted during the negotiations about the inheritance in 876, represent for Kasten only a superficial equality of the three brothers. In the type and scope of Charles's territory she sees nothing more than a duchy, and certainly no realm.⁶⁵

Brigitte Kasten's opinion and similar judgments are informed by a wider view of the later Carolingian rulers in general, and Charles the Fat in particular, as physically and mentally weak. In this context, Charles's outburst was simply one point in a series of disasters leading to the end of the empire in 888.

But even if Charles's inclusion in his father's government and military policy was not as extensive as that of his brothers, he still participated in the reign, had his own territory, was mentioned in official documents and undertook military

⁶⁰ *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 869, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 68–69: “Cumque iam proficiscendum esset, aegrotare coepit; unde necessitate compulsus Karolum filiorum suorum ultimum eidem exercitui praefecit Domino exitum rei commendans” (“And when it was time to set off, he became ill and was forced to give command of his army to his youngest son Charles and to entrust the outcome to God”). See also Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 521 and Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 276.

⁶¹ Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 530.

⁶² Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 545.

⁶³ Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 540.

⁶⁴ Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 537.

⁶⁵ Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 540.

tasks for the king.⁶⁶ The assumption that Charles was excluded from power after his public attack has to be rejected in light of the fact that this son later ruled over the whole of Francia. Based on Kasten's arguments, we can more plausibly suspect that Louis the German was not so fond of his youngest son, but not that a disease was the reason for his discrimination.

At first sight descriptions of Charles's behavior support the view that it may have been an epileptic fit.⁶⁷ If we also consider the numerous diseases of the Carolingians, whether hereditary or not, and also keep in mind that the symptoms of epilepsy were known and the coexistence of possession and epilepsy had a long tradition in Frankish history,⁶⁸ then it seems understandable to suggest that an epileptic fit was outlined by the annalists as possession by the Devil. But in the *Annals of St. Bertin* this conclusion was made by Hincmar of Reims, a powerful and educated man, who was in close contact with the medical authorities of the early Middle Ages.⁶⁹ It was he who diagnosed epilepsy for two cousins of Charles without any hesitation: for Charles of the Provence and Charles the Child.⁷⁰ Hincmar was a supporter of Charles the Bald, the direct competitor of Louis the German, and it is improbable that he would have wanted to cover an alleged epileptic illness of Charles by possession with the intention of protecting the reputation of Louis the German as a strong and healthy king. It is more likely that Hincmar would have reported an epileptic fit if one had actually and clearly taken place.

66 For a positive interpretation of Charles and his political actions, see Costambeys, *The Carolingian World* (see note 1), 422–26.

67 *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 873, *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873 and *Annales Xantenses*, s.a. 873 as cited in note 2, 3 and 4, where they describe how he began to shake and scream in a loud and unarticulated voice.

68 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 169. He refers to the monograph of Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

69 Compare John J. Contreni, "Masters and Medicine in Northern France during the reign of Charles the Bald," *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. Margret Gibson and Janet L. Nelson (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), 271–72.

70 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 863, ed. Grat (see note 2), 96: "Karolus, Hlotharii imperatoris filius et rex Provinciae, diu epeleptica infirmitate vexatur moritur" ("Charles, the son of emperor Lothar and king of Provence, died, after he had long suffered from the falling sickness"). And id., s.a. 866, ed. Grat, 130: "Karoli filius nomine Karolus et Aquitanorum rex, ex plaga quam in capite ante aliquet annos acceperat cerebro commoto, diutius epeleptica passione vexatus, III Kalendas Octobris in quadam villa secus Bosentiacas moritur . . ." ("Charles's son Charles, the king of Aquitaine, who received a concussion from a blow on the head years ago, died, after he had suffered a long time from the falling sickness, in September 29 on an estate near Buzançais . . .").

Another problem of the epilepsy thesis is that, corresponding to contemporary explanations of Charles's behavior as possession by the Devil, his suffering was exclusively treated with a so-called hagiotherapy. The bishops and priests drove out the evil by means of appeals and prayers. They also visited with him the shrines of the martyrs, which could have caused his recovery.⁷¹ Instead of medical measures, which were not taken, an exorcism process was carried out. If it would have been a medical emergency, medics and not priests would have been consulted, as after all doctors existed also in the Carolingian era. Besides Lothar I and Lothar II, Charles also mentioned one *medici* with the name Wolfher in a document.⁷² *Medici* were present in the direct environment of the Frankish rulers and came to the court as legates. Even if it can not be compared with the modern understanding of medical treatment, medical care existed in the ninth century and was practiced in the secular world.⁷³

Furthermore, another argument against the epilepsy-thesis is that the sources neither mention the sudden fall that already in antiquity was characteristic of this disease,⁷⁴ nor do they attest that the symptoms of 873 appeared more than once in the case of Charles. We have an annotation from Hincmar of Reims about a weakness in 876 during a meeting with Louis the Younger, but apparently this weakness did not correspond to a heavy suffering.⁷⁵ In a document dated July 30, 883, Charles shows his appreciation for the saint Alexander of Bergamo, as he recovered “a gravi infirmitate corporis” because of his intercessions.⁷⁶ Therefore

71 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 178: “Mit ihren Maßnahmen standen die fränkischen Geistlichen in einer sehr langen Tradition, die letztlich bis auf das Neue Testament zurückgeht. Dort wird in den Evangelien von der Heilung eines Epileptikers berichtet . . .” (“The measures that were taken by the Frankish clergymen were part of a long tradition that is rooted in the New Testament. The Gospel reported a healing of an epileptic . . .”).

72 Karoli III. Diplomata, No. 14, s.a. 879, ed. P. F. Kehr. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum*, 2 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1937), 21–22; compare also Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 351.

73 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 353 and 390–91.

74 See Hansjörg Schneble, *Krankheit der ungezählten Namen: Ein Beitrag zur Sozial-, Kultur- und Medizingeschichte der Epilepsie anhand ihrer Benennung vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart* (Bern, Stuttgart, and Toronto: H. Huber, 1987), 78–80.

75 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 876, ed. Grat (see note 2), 210: “Ubi simul locuti, Karolus versus Mettis indeque in Alemanniam infirmus rediit, et Hludowicus ultra Rhenum perrexit” (“After their meeting Charles returned sick to Metz and from there back to Alemannia, and Louis went over the Rhine”).

76 Karoli III. Diplomata, No. 89, s.a. 883, ed. P. F. Kehr. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum*, 2 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1937), 144–47.

the recovery followed a heavy, but temporary disease, from which he probably suffered during a journey to Italy in the same year. The *Annals of Fulda* reported that in the same year a plague spread through Charles's army, which finally reached also the court of the emperor and eventually the emperor himself.⁷⁷ First in 887 his state of health changed dramatically and the *Annals of Fulda* write about a suffering which forced the emperor to stay in bed for several days.⁷⁸ According to their *Continuatio Ratisbonenses*, the king travelled—yet not entirely recovered—to the Palatine Bodman, where he had an operation in 887.⁷⁹

Older historical literature leaned toward interpreting this “incisio” as an operation on the head itself: that is to say as a real surgical procedure to open the head, intended to heal Charles from long-lasting epileptic suffering.⁸⁰ But it seems that Charles already recovered in spring and was able to cover large distances, so that he could participate in a Hoftag on Easter in Waiblingen.⁸¹ Because of that and other reasons, Hans Oesterle has rightly pointed out that the text is best read as signifying a letting of blood to cure a headache, not an incision of the head itself, and that standard ninth-century medical wisdom would not have advised trepanning for either head pains, or for epilepsy.⁸²

Considering the medical history of Charles, we can only diagnose that the emperor was very often relatively seriously ill during his last years, but that he almost always recovered and absolved an immense political program.⁸³

. . . allein schon sein Itinerar war ziemlich beachtlich und führt klar vor Augen, dass Karl keinesfalls die ganze Zeit hindurch ein todkranker Mann war.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ *Annales Fuldenses* (Cont. Ratisb.), s.a. 883, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 110.

⁷⁸ *Annales Fuldenses* (Continuatio Mogontina), s.a. 886, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 105: “Ipse vero inde concito gradu in Alsatiā se recepit ibique per plures dies iacuit aegrotus” (“He withdrew quickly from there to the Alsace and here he laid down sick several days”).

⁷⁹ *Annales Fuldenses* (Cont. Ratisb.), s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 115.

⁸⁰ Compare Wolf, *Operation* (see note 50).

⁸¹ *Annales Fuldenses* (Cont. Ratisb.), s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 115.

⁸² Oesterle, *Kopfoperation* (see note 38).

⁸³ Simon MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 41: “There is no evidence that this was anything more than a one-off fever.”

A detailed listing of Charles residences during his last months is provided by Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 267–68. From the last thirteen months of his reign, his chancellery made out about 31 documents to addressees from the whole kingdom.

⁸⁴ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 181. Simon MacLean supports this view in his article, “Charles the Fat and the Viking Great Army: the military explanation for the end of the Carolingian empire,” *War Studies Journal* 3 (1998): 74–95, and in *Kingship and Politics* (see note 85), 55–64.

[“His itinerary was rather remarkable and presents clearly that Charles was in no way the whole time a terminally ill man.”]

One last important point for Charles lasting presentation as an epileptic and ill king lies in the last unfortunate month before his death. 887 was a fateful year for him. He had to deal with various Norman invasions in the West Frankish part of the realm, which led to dissatisfaction among his followers, he was divorced from his wife, who praised in public her virginity and withdrew to a monastery, and his search for a legitimate heir failed due to accidents and the resistance of the nobility. The emperor began to suffer in body and spirit.⁸⁵ In this situation he was violently dethroned by his nephew Arnulf. His sovereignty and power had been destroyed within a short period of time and the emperor became a beggar.⁸⁶ Finally Charles’s weak condition resulted in his death on the 13th of January 888.⁸⁷

In Regino of Prüm’s presentation, Charles does not appear as being ill for a lifetime. The disease that led to his death broke out for the first time only months before. The suffering of the spirit that he reported should not to understand as a mental illness as we understand it today, since the actions of Charles were not accompanied by increasing confusion or insanity.⁸⁸ Regino only alludes to the body-spirit-dualism, which belongs to a long ancient and medieval tradition in which soul and body form an alliance and the disease consequently becomes a psychosomatic unity.⁸⁹

The older literature saw in Charles’s disease the main reason for his removal from power based on the opinion that epilepsy reduced the ability of a ruler to govern.⁹⁰ But several epileptic kings on different thrones in the course of history—

⁸⁵ *Reginonis Chronicon*, s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 47), 127: “His ita gestis, imperator corpore et animo cepit aegrotare . . . Cernentes optimates regni non modo vires corporis, verum etiam animi sensus ab eo diffugare . . .” (“After these events the emperor began to suffer in body and soul . . . As the nobles of the realm saw that he was losing not only his strength, but also his reason. . .”).

⁸⁶ *Reginonis Chronicon*, s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 47), 128.

⁸⁷ *Reginonis Chronicon*, s.a. 888, ed. Kurze (see note 47), 128–29; *Annales Fuldenses*, (Cont. Ratisb.), s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 115.

⁸⁸ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 224.

⁸⁹ Mirko D. Grmek, “Das Krankheitskonzept,” *Die Geschichte des medizinischen Denkens: Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek and Bernardino Fantini (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996), 260–77 and 445–47; here 277. See also Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 224, with secondary literature in footnote 277.

⁹⁰ Rudolf Schieffer, “Kaiser Arnolf und die deutsche Geschichte,” *Kaiser Arnolf. Das ostfränkische Reich am Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts. Regensburger Kolloquium 9.–11.12.1999*, ed. Franz Fuchs and Peter Schmidt. *Zeitschrift für Bayrische Landesgeschichte*, 19, B (Munich: Beck, 2002), 1–16; here 3 and Peter Schmid, “Kaiser Arnolf, Bayern und Regensburg,” *Kaiser Arnolf*, ed. Fuchs/Schmidt, 187–220; here 195. Concerning the dismissal of the emperor, see Konrad Bund, *Thron-*

from Caesar to Napoleon—contradict this assumption.⁹¹ Furthermore the early medieval annalists do report indispositions of their kings often, for example a life-threatening illness of Louis the German, from which he suffered nearly half a year in 869, and an illness shortly before his death. Still this king is known as one of the most powerful rulers of the medieval Occident. As seen above, the sources also described the symptoms of illness in the cases of Emma, Carloman and Arnulf. Diseases were not the most popular topic of the annalist, but they did not exclude them.⁹² We can assume that Charles's worsened health condition was one of the reasons for his fall, but not the main one, as was implied by Ernst Dümmler.⁹³ At least in the sources, the illness of Charles does not play any role as a legitimate reason for his dismissal.⁹⁴ The main reason was that he had no legitimate heir and refused to adopt his nephew Arnulf. The decision to dethrone Charles was influenced by political and not medical reasons.

The thesis of a hereditary disease and the assumption that Charles outburst in 873 was an epileptic fit as a consequence of such a disease within the Carolingian family can therefore not be unambiguously verified. It may be true that

sturz und Herrscherabsetzung im Frühmittelalter. Bonner Historische Forschungen, 44 (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1979), 405–28 and 478–89; Dümmler, *Geschichte des Ostfränkischen Reiches III* (see note 14), 270–90; Paul Friedolin Kehr, “Aus den letzten Tagen Karls III.,” *Königswahl und Thronfolge in fränkisch-karolingischer Zeit*, ed. Eduard Hlawitschka. Wege der Forschung, 247 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), 399–412; Hagen Keller, “Zum Sturz Karls III.: Über die Rolle Liutwards von Vercelli und Liutberts von Mainz, Arnulfs von Kärnten und der ostfränkischen Großen bei der Absetzung des Kaisers,” *Königswahl und Thronfolge in fränkisch-karolingischer Zeit*, ed. Eduard Hlawitschka. Wege der Forschung, 247 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), 432–94; Eduard Hlawitschka, *Lotharingen und das Reich an der Schwelle der deutschen Geschichte*. Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 21 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1968), 26–64; id., “Nachfolgeprojekte aus der Spätzeit Kaiser Karls III.,” *Deutsches Archiv* 34 (1978): 1–99; MacLean, *Kingship and Politics* (see note 85), 161–98; Gerd Tellenbach, “Die geistigen und politischen Grundlagen der karolingischen Thronfolge: Zugleich eine Studie über kollektive Willensbildung und kollektives Handeln im neunten Jahrhundert,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 13 (1979): 184–302; here 229–33 and 294–302.

91 See Temkin, *Falling Sickness* (see note 70), 162.

92 Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 254. Compare also MacLean, *Kingship and Politics* (see note 85), 41: “. . . any royal illness was big news, but it is not justifiable to string these individual examples together to support a claim that Charles was in general a ‘weak’ or ‘sickly’ individual.” This assumption can eg. be found also in Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (see note 1), 67: “. . . vielleicht war er schon immer kränklich und musste daher so lange auf eine selbstständiges militärisches Kommando warten” (“. . . maybe he always was sickly und because of that had to wait so long for an own military command”).

93 Dümmler, *Geschichte des Ostfränkischen Reiches III* (see note 14), 286.

94 Hack, *Alter, Tod, Krankheit* (see note 9), 272.

Emma, Carloman, and Arnulf suffered from apoplexy and aphasia and died of strokes, but in the older historical research these diseases were also discussed under the reference “hereditary disease” which does not reflect the modern stage of medical research. In particular the assumption has been proven wrong that both Louis the Younger and Charles the Fat died of strokes, because the sources do not provide evidence for such a view. This idea was predominantly created through contributions from the time of the National Socialism, which tried to explain the decline of the Frankish dynasty by a determined hereditary disease.

Epilepsy too occurred several times within the Carolingian family and was considered hereditary. But even if every Carolingian who suffered from epilepsy was a grandson of Louis the Pious, there cannot be found any evidence for such an illness in the cases of their fathers or their numerous siblings.⁹⁵

Charles the Fat’s role in the scientific historical literature as an epileptic is in general informed by his outburst in 873. But since the contemporary sources interpret this event as a possession by the Devil, the bishops performed an exorcism and did not undertake medical measures. Also the numerous diseases from which the later emperor suffered in his last years were not that unusual, as in particular the Carolingian rulers during the last third of the 9th century were affected by many epidemics, mainly related to their numerous journeys to Italy, eg. Lothar I, Lothar II, Charles the Bald, and Carloman.⁹⁶ The emperor seemed not to have died of a certain disease from which he had suffered years earlier, but rather from a new illness.

Considering his outburst in 873 we should and we must rather emanate from a singular event and avoid a concrete identification of the disease, because the symptoms described are not sufficient for a clear diagnose.⁹⁷ The annalists do not identify the outburst as an illness, but interpret it as a possession by the Devil. So if we are to make a diagnosis, then the outburst showed symptoms of a psychogenic syncope, of a so called major hysteric attack.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Arno Borst, *Lebensformen im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, and Vienna: Ullstein, 1988), 111, referring to the outburst of Charles the Fat: “. . . niemand hätte sich da einreden lassen, die Ursache liege in der Vererbung oder Gehirnschädigung bei Geburt” (“. . . nobody could be convinced that the origin lies in the heredity or brain damage during birth”).

⁹⁶ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 185.

⁹⁷ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 183.

⁹⁸ Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod* (see note 9), 400.

IV Piety and Ritual

Over the last few decades medieval historical research has tried to distance itself from the traditional interpretation of the events in 873, as it was marked by the ideology of the Third Reich. Several revaluations were made, that interpreted this event not from a medical point of view, but tried to put it in contexts of cultural history and symbolical communication.

In the course of this revaluation Janet Nelson offered a persuasive new interpretation of Charles's behavior that contradicts the traditional opinion of sickness and possession and concentrates more on the information presented in the contemporary sources. She identifies Charles's attempt to renounce the world as representative of a more general phenomenon of the decades around 900, that of the conflicted elite layman.⁹⁹ She argues that Charles was one of a number of aristocratic and royal males who internalised Church teachings about the sinfulness of war and sex. Like many ninth-century laymen, he seems to have been genuinely pious in his Christian beliefs and apparently felt deeply conflicted about the demands of secular politics: sex, violence, pride, and rebellion. Between 870 and 872 he had rebelled repeatedly against his father at the urging of Louis the Younger and his own vassals. In this political situation, he was under intense political and psychological pressure. It seemed that on January 873, no longer capable of coping with the situation, he decided to not carry out his impious conspiracy against Louis the German.¹⁰⁰ The strong moral demands to obey his father may well have created crises for young men feeling unable to do so.¹⁰¹ The whole situation could have led to the desire of the prince, who did not seem to be the favorite of his father, to renounce the secular world and become a monk.¹⁰² His claim, that he had never had sexual intercourse with his wife—also in 887, when he was divorced from her¹⁰³—supports this interpretation. According to Nelson, the incident provides some access to the inner life of a pious layman, a troubled child of the Carolingian *correction* and therefore could offer new insights into the mentality of Charles the Fat.¹⁰⁴

99 Janet L. Nelson, "Monks, Secular Men and Masculinity, c. 900," *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley (London: Longman, 1999), 121–42. For valuable contributions, see also Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1).

100 Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 316.

101 Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 324–25.

102 Kasten, *Königssöhne* (see note 16), 566.

103 *Reginonis Chronicon*, s.a. 887, ed. Kurze (see note 47), 127.

104 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 104.

In the Frankish world there was a long tradition of kings and princes opting out to become monks and pilgrims.¹⁰⁵ But until this moment only two kings had renounced the secular world voluntarily during the Carolingian era: Carloman in 747 and the emperor Lothar I in the 850s.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless most similar decisions were made under duress, when the princes were forced to accept the tonsure after political rebellions or conspiracies.¹⁰⁷

Charles the Fat's behavior in 873 could in fact be interpreted as a real wish to become a monk and withdraw from the political field, but there still remains the question of why he did not fulfil his wish: if he really was so stressed by the surrounding world that he had to declare his wish in such a dramatic way, the logical consequence would have been to fulfil his plan. But the prince remained in his position. Finally, by April his father had dissuaded Charles III from becoming a monk—if that indeed had been his intention—and reinstated him as the royal governor of Alemannia.¹⁰⁸ If he had not changed his mind spontaneously we have to assume that other reasons were decisive for his behavior.

Simon MacLean offers another, “most obvious interpretation, yet one which has never been put forward, that the prince's outburst was not an expression of generalized inner turmoil, but instead a specific attempt to perform penance.”¹⁰⁹ MacLean tends to analyse Charles's behavior as a type of penitential ritual which was intended to end a recent series of rebellions, but was misunderstood by the annalists. With this interpretation MacLean puts the event of 873 in the context of symbolical communication, a field of medieval research, which was created and examined during the last years by the works of Gerd Althoff.¹¹⁰

105 Taken from MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstandings, and the Contest of Meaning* (see note 8), 104; Clare Stancliff, “Kings Who Opted out,” *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. Patrick Wormland, Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 154–76.

106 Schieffer, *Karolinger* (see note 1), 57–58 and 152.

107 See therefore Mayke de Jong, “Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion in the Frankish Kingdoms,” *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuvs with Carine van Rhijn. The Transformation of the Roman World, 6 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2001), 291–328. Princes who had to renounce their secular office under duress were, for example, the halfbrothers of Louis the Pious, Louis himself in 833, and Hugo of Lotharingia, the illegitimate son of Lothar II.

108 Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 317.

109 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 104. In his assumption he is supported by Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Ages of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 268, as well as id., “What was public about Public Penance? *Paenitentia Publica* and Justice in the Carolingian World,” *La giustizia nell' alto medioevo (secoli IX-XI)*, *Settimane*, 44 (1997): 863–902.

110 Although Althoff hardly examined the Carolingian epoch, his observations were decisive

Considering the tradition of rituals during the Carolingian era, where penance played a main role, it stands out that contemporary canonical pronouncements on the subject of penance conform very closely to some aspects of Charles's outburst.¹¹¹ When Louis the Pious was dethroned by his sons in 833, he had to renounce his power in a public ritual of penance through different symbolic acts. Louis is said to have lied down on the floor of the church, loudly and tearfully confessing his crimes, before removing his sword belt and armour and throwing them on the altar. He acted under duress and so texts were employed whose very purpose was to establish the correctness of his penitential body language.¹¹² They

for the investigation of rituals and communication during the entire Middle Ages, see: Gerd Althoff, "Der fñeden-, bñndnis- und gemeinschaftsstiftende Charakter des Mahls im frñheren Mittelalter," *Essen und Trinken in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Vortrãge eines interdisziplinãren Symposions vom 10.–13. Juni 1987 an der Justus-Liebig-Universitãt Giessen*, ed. Irmgard Bitsch, Trude Ehlert, and Xenja von Ertzdorff (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 13–25; id., "Der Kñnig weint: Rituelle Trãnen in öffentlicher Kommunikation," *'Auffñhrungen' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und Frñher Neuzeit*, ed. Jan-Dirk Mñller. Germanistische Symposien. Berichtsbãnde, 17 (Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 1996), 239–52; id., "Zur Bedeutung symbolischer Kommunikation fñr das Verstãndnis des Mittelalters," *Frñhmittelalterliche Studien* 31 (1997): 370–87; id., *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt: Primus, 1997); see also the contributions to *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, ed. Gerd Althoff. Vortrãge und Forschung, 51 (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001); *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. id., Johannes Fried, Patrick J. Geary. Publications of the German Institute (Cambridge, Washington DC: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale: Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003). A strong critique considering Althoff's examination of the ritual of crying was given by Peter Dinzelbacher, *Warum weint der Kñnig? Eine Kritik des mediãvistischen Panritualismus* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Dr. Michael P. Bachmann, 2009). See now, for a perspective situated between both extremes, Albrecht Classen, "Crying in Public and in Private: Tears and Crying in Medieval German Literature," *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 230–48.

111 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 104.

112 Compare *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 833, ed. Grat (see note 2), 10: "Et tam diu illum vexaverunt, quousque arma deponere habitumque mutare cogentes liminibus ecclesiae pepulerunt, ita ut nullus cum eo loqui auderet nisi illi qui ad hoc fuerant deputati" ("And they long tormented the emperor until he was forced to take off his weapons and to change his clothes, and expelled him from the threshold of the church, so that nobody dared speak to him, except for the ones who were prescribed for that"); *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 834, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 27: "Post haec iudicio episcoporum arma deposuit et ad agendam poenitentiam inclusus est, uxor in Italiam ducta" ("He often put down the weapons after the judgement of the bishops and was locked down to do penance, his wife brought to Italy").

required that the penitent renounce three things in particular: his sword belt, his marriage, and his right to hold public office.¹¹³

Penance during the early Middle Ages, or penitential behavior, was communicated as much through body language as it was by observance of liturgically 'correct' ritual, although the Carolingian absorption of these ideas focused primarily on the penitents' physical behavior.¹¹⁴

According to Simon MacLean, besides the penance of Louis the Pious, three other models may apply for Charles's outburst, which can be seen as the best-known reference points for royal penance, containing descriptions of penitential body language which correlate closely with what we are told about Charles's behavior at the Frankfurt assembly.¹¹⁵

The most popular historical exemplar of penance as a display of royal or imperial humility was that of the Roman Emperor Theodosius, who performed penance at the behest of Archbishop Ambrose of Milan in 390 to atone for a massacre. Theodosius's behavior was very demonstrative: he threw himself on the ground in the Church, tearing at his hair, striking himself, and shedding tears while he implored God's forgiveness. This event was admired by medieval rulers.¹¹⁶ Another possible model could have been the penance of King David, whose royal penance was prominent in ninth-century writings on kingship. The markers of his penitential behavior are described as being more demonstrative rather than ritual: without even waiting, the King throws himself on the ground in sackcloth, loudly bewailing his sins.¹¹⁷ The third available model was the Visigothic monarchy, which has often been seen as a major source of Carolingian political ideas. In Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae* the usurper Paul, upon looking

113 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 104. Other key requirements were that penitents went everywhere on foot and that they ate no meat. For discussion, see Leyser, *Early Medieval Canon Law* (see note 54), 55–59, and Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance 900–1050*. Royal Historical Society Studies in History (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001), 6.

114 Hamilton, *Practice of Penance* (see note 115), 128–35.

115 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 105–6.

116 Cassiodori-Epiphaniï *historia ecclesiastica tripartite IX.30*, ed. Walther Jacob and Rudolf Hanslik (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1952), 540–46. This text was best known in the Carolingian empire through a translation in the fifth-century; see MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 105.

117 Césaire d'Arles, *sermons au peuple*, vol. III., ed. Marie-José Delage. Sources Chrétiennes, 330 (Paris: Cerf, 1986), 110. The description of David's penance was the most influential in the ninth century. See Mayke de Jong, "Transformations of Penance," *Rituals of Power from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Frany Theuws and Janet L. Nelson. The Transformation of the Roman World, 8 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2000), 185–224; here 201.

King Wamba in the eye, spontaneously removes his quasi-royal clothing and sword belt, and prostrates himself on the ground in defeat.¹¹⁸

As a son of Louis the German, and the grandson of Louis the Pious, Charles knew such texts at first hand. MacLean points out that the attempt of Charles to divest himself of these badges of elite secular status is what we are told he expressed in 873:

The models of Theodosius and David had been brought firmly and explicitly into the mainstream of Carolingian political discourse by the two famous penances of Louis the Pious, in 822 and 833.¹¹⁹

The sudden outburst of Charles the Fat, his physical behavior which correlates with many characteristics of the rituals mentioned before in public penances of kings, who can be seen as archetypes for the Carolingian rulers, support the assumption, that Charles's was attempting to perform some kind of public penance. His behavior at the 873 assembly should therefore be understood as neither an epileptic fit nor a symptom of mental instability, nor even as a spontaneous expression of a pious desire to withdraw from the world, but rather as an attempt to make a gesture in the form of a public penance, informed by a contemporary set of ideas which drew on ancient and venerated models.¹²⁰

The reason for his action can be attributed to the situation in which Charles the Fat found himself and which could be described not only as explosive but also as dangerous for the young prince. Although Louis the German had announced in 865 a division plan, extreme tensions between the king and his two younger sons had led to two open rebellions since 870. In January 873, these family tensions were still seething and Charles was under great pressure. In addition, his cousin in the West Frankish Empire had been blinded only few weeks earlier by his father, Charles the Bald, under very similar circumstances.¹²¹ This event increased the tension even more.¹²²

118 See Mayke de Jong, "Adding Insult to Injury: Julian of Toledo and his *Historia Wambae*," *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Peter Heather. Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology, 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 373–89; here 380–81.

119 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 106.

120 Cf. MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 106.

121 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873, ed. Grat (see note 2), 190; *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 873, ed. Kurze (see note 3), 78: "Karolus Galliae tyrannus paterna miseratione deposita Karlmannum filium suum in diaconatus officio positum excaecare praecepit" ("Charles, the tyrant of Gaul, forgetting the paternal pity, blinded his son Carloman, who held the position of deacon").

122 In Mayke de Jong's, "Power and Humility in Carolingian Society: the Public penance of

Public penance under these circumstances was not necessarily a prelude to abdication and entering a monastery. Charles knew that his position was in danger and the way to make amends was to do public penance and that if the penance was seen to be voluntary, there was a chance of forgiveness. It was an attempt to end a dispute in which the risks had become too high. The memories of Louis the Pious' troubled relationship with his sons and accusations in 833 hung in the air and as consequence Charles the Fat reacted to his own moral and political predicament by performing a ritual which paralleled the actions of his grandfather. We may therefore explain Charles's attempt to perform public penance not simply by his internalisation of ninth-century lessons about Christian behavior which conflicted with the demands of an elite secular lifestyle, but rather as an appropriate response to political circumstances.¹²³ Possibly we really have here a genuine snapshot of the mental state and personality of a prince under extreme pressure, throwing himself desperately at his father's mercy.

With Charles's statement afterwards, that he was possessed by the devil every time that he tried to instigate a conspiracy against his father, he tried to reject the blame regarding his numerous rebellions. But while Charles presented his desperate attempt to do penance and shocked everybody in place, his brother Louis acted differently. He fell at his father's feet, confessed his sins and begged for forgiveness.¹²⁴ His comportment conformed to the submission ritual of *deditio* which was used to mark the end of many political rebellions in this period.¹²⁵ The social logic of public submissions was that kings, in this case Louis the German, were forced to accept the public penance, especially if it came from their own son, or risk being criticized as unmerciful and un-Christian.¹²⁶

Louis the Pious," *Early Medieval Europe* 1 (1992): 29–52; she named as reason for such a spontaneous public penance the case of *scandulum*, defined as 'flagrant violation of the bonds of family and society, leading to public strife and possibly bloodshed', which was the principal accusation levelled at Louis the Pious in 833. Almost all of the written division plans of the ninth century stated that kings should divide benefices justly, in case an inequitable split led to *scandulum*, in other words civil war or rebellion.

123 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 107.

124 *Annales Xantenses*, s.a. 873, ed. von Simson, 32.

125 For the meaning of *deditio* and the importance of norms for rituals during the Early Middle Ages, see the work of Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter* (see note 112), where he published, amongst others, "Das Privileg der *Deditio*: Formen gütlicher Konfliktbeendigung in der mittelalterlichen Adelsgesellschaft," 99–125, and "Demonstration und Inszenierung: Spielregeln der Kommunikation in mittelalterlicher Öffentlichkeit," 229–57.

126 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 107. See also Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 317.

In contrast Charles's attempt to perform a legal ritual of penance was not recognized by the contemporary annalists and those present. The problem was that his physical behavior did not conform to the correct idealized rituals of penance from contemporary Canon and liturgy collection.¹²⁷ The 'correct' way to perform penance can be seen in 833 with the example of Louis the Pious. His ritual was reportedly confirmed by the bishops laying hands on the Emperor, while in Charles's case the bishops were using their hands to hold him down.¹²⁸

As Althoff has pointed out, such performances were normally played out and evaluated in accordance with commonly understood unwritten social norms, and were carefully negotiated and arranged in advance.¹²⁹ This was the way of saving face all around, avoiding dangerous accusations being aired in public, communicated the end of disputes to the political community, restored hierarchy and permitted a negotiated compromise.¹³⁰

The shock of the observers during Charles outburst was obvious in the sources and does suggest a genuine spontaneity, which challenged the expectations of the observers and could be attributed to a moral crisis of the youngest prince. While Louis the German was appalled, the bishops were thunderstruck.¹³¹ Charles's behavior seemed to have broken the rules, because it was regarded as ambiguous, disruptive, transgressive, and shocking. It was misunderstood, while Louis's measured actions meant that his contrition was accepted as legitimate. Their comportment sent different messages to the audience.¹³² The case of Charles's outburst demonstrates that the boundary between a correct public penance and this form of secular submission was very narrow. As a 'proper' penance, as he intended it to be, it was not understood as a legitimate ritual. All chroniclers were bishops or belonged to the clergy, who felt deeply about how power should be held and expressed. Maybe they realized what Charles was trying to do, but his breaking the 'rules' led them to consciously misunderstand his intentions and to deny the validity of his actions. At this tense moment, the disruptiveness of his behavior could only

127 Hamilton, *Practice of Penance* (see note 115), 34–38, and 104–18. Besides it was the wrong time of the year, there were no bishop orchestrating the proceeding, the seven penitential psalms were apparently not sung and so on.

128 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873, ed. Grat (see note 2), 191.

129 See Althoff, *Spielregeln* (see note 112), 123–25, 249–50, and 257.

130 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 108–09.

131 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 873, ed. Grat (see note 2), 191.

132 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 109.

be explained by reference to dark purposes and diabolical influence: that was the only rational conclusion.¹³³

The authors thus incorporated the incident into their own political agendas. As mentioned above, Hincmar wrote his version as a moral tale which accused Louis the German to favor one of his sons and to provoke with his behavior the rebellions of his other heirs, while the *Annales of Fulda* direct the moral of the story at Louis the Younger, in whose sphere of influence they were being written. Charles outburst was not recorded as a public ritual, but his behavior was used as a mirror to hold up against other members of the royal family.

To summarize, Charles tried to perform a submission in the form of a public penance in an attempt to bring his rebellion against his father to an end. But driven by general feelings of guilt and by the intense pressure of contemporary political circumstances he acted too spontaneously, what shocked the audience and broke the political rules, which required a negotiation in advance, so that both sides could arrange a compromise and save face. As a result the sources did not represent the prince's outburst as a legitimate political ritual, but rather as disruptive and diabolically inspired.¹³⁴

The outburst of Charles the Fat in January 873 still remains, after more than 1000 years, a mystery. But in the course of time three ideas of interpretation were developed, which I have here presented and discussed.

The most common interpretation, based on studies from the Third Reich but still accepted nowadays, was that Charles the Fat was a sick and weak king, who suffered from epilepsy because of a hereditary disease which was rampant within the Carolingian family. The deaths of his mother and brother caused by apoplexy and aphasia, his medical history during the last years of his life, the refusal of his father, to integrate him completely into the politics of the Frankish kingdom, as well as his dethronement in 887 were taken as evidence for this hypothesis.

But during the last years, several approaches have questioned the idea of a hereditary illness and excluded epilepsy as a hereditary characteristic of the Carolingian dynasty. New research has revealed that the interpretation of Charles's outburst in 873 as an epileptic fit neither corresponds with the description of Charles's state of health in the contemporary sources nor with his political actions as prince and king. His illnesses, including the outburst in 873, seemed to have been singular events and he carried out an immense political program during his reign.

133 Compare MacLean, *Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 110 and Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire* (see note 1), 316.

134 MacLean, *Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning* (see note 8), 110–11.

In recent decades, the age of the Carolingians has been reassessed and in this context two interesting interpretations have been developed which have tried to explain Charles's strange actions. First of all, Janet Nelson proposed an interpretation that sees in Charles's outburst a desperate wish to renounce the secular world and become a monk, as he found himself in a situation where he could not reconcile his Christian values with the political world of violence and intrigue he was facing. He was under enormous moral pressure and therefore tried desperately to forgo his secular position. But although this interpretation cast an interesting light on the events in Frankfurt, it is doubtful that Charles's declaration of his desire to renounce the secular world reflected his real intention, since, despite his alleged desperation, he did not fulfill his plan and was later restored in his position, and finally even became the emperor of Francia.

On this basis Simon MacLead developed an alternative approach, which is mostly accepted by current historical research. He explains Charles's behavior as a failed penitential ritual that was misinterpreted by contemporaries as demonic possession. His physical behavior showed many symbolic gestures that also were used by different kings during the century who tried to obtain forgiveness by penitential rituals. The characteristics of such a ritual were, among others, kneeling down on the ground of the church, a tearfully and loudly confession of the committed crimes, taking off the royal clothes, throwing the sword on the altar and pronounced renouncement of the secular position. Some of these characteristics are attributed to Charles in 873. He knew about such symbolic acts, which his grandfather Louis the Pious had already performed in 833.

Charles rebellions had brought him into a miserable situation, and the fact that his cousin was blinded by his father in a similar situation put him visibly under pressure. Through a spontaneous public penance he may have wanted to assure the forgiveness of his father, who would not have had any other possibility than to accept his confession. But Charles's physical behavior did not conform to the accepted norms for such a ritual and obviously it was not negotiated in advance, as it was in most cases despite an alleged spontaneity, so that both sides could save face. There were rules that had to be obeyed if a ritual were to be considered successful. Charles may have broken these rules through actual spontaneity and the exaggeration of his behavior. Maybe the author of the annals realized what his intention was, but refused to recognize his outburst as a real penitential ritual because it violated stated norms. A consensus thereby was formed by those present that the events in 873 could only be explained by the possession of the devil.

Although the explanation of Charles behavior as a failed penitential ritual provides many convincing argumentation, still some questions remain unanswered. How could it be, that a prince, who lived thirty years in the court and most likely

knew every text worth knowing about the practice of rituals could fail in such a dramatic way in performing this act that nobody understood his intention? Why was the penance of Louis the Younger recognized and accepted, while Charles's was not? Since the brothers planned to carry out their conspiracy together, we have to consider two possibilities concerning this ritual behavior. Either Charles and Louis both had failed to achieve a compromise with their father, which would speak in favor of a failed ritual attempt, or they arranged everything in advance, as was usual during the ninth century. If it happened that way and the situation was already clarified, then why should Charles feel panic-stricken and even risk everything by performing a ritual act that did not conform to common norms? In addition, his physical performance did not only contain acknowledged elements of penance, but also inexplicable actions, like his attempt to fight and to bite the people holding him. As far as I know, such behavior does not appear as characteristic in any ritual and none of the interpretations presented above offer a satisfying explanation.

So, it may be that the rebellions and conspiracies which Charles planned with his brother put him—probably because of his Christian education—under so much pressure that he could no longer take responsibility for his actions. Because of the tensions with his father, he failed to achieve an agreement with him in advance and feared that the king could even punish him during the assembly. For that reason he could have decided spontaneously to do penance by performing a public ritual, as he knew had happened in Carolingian history before. When the moment came, Charles acted by himself and due to his mental condition, yet he could not maintain the correct form of the penitential ritual. Through his exaggerated and shocking performance the contemporaries misunderstood his intention and explained it as demonic possession. Although this explanation offers an interesting view on Charles's behavior, too many questions remain unanswered.

After the presentation and closer examination of all three theories—epilepsy, piety, ritual—in this analysis, it has become apparent that, on the one hand, they have their own value respectively, but, on the other, also leave enough space for counter-arguments, since the contemporary sources offer only a description of the events and not an explanation of their background. But relying on the information given by the contemporaries, I would propose to go back to the roots and explain the outburst from a medical point of view, although I would avoid a clear diagnosis as epilepsy or even as a hysterical attack and definitively reject the idea of a hereditary disease. Charles's mental and physical behavior in 873 gives the impression of an uncontrolled and unforeseen action, which not only surprised the audience but also the prince himself, so that he too had to offer an explanation for the outburst. And although the alleged head operation was truly

revealed as a bleeding, we have to wonder why the chronicler found a simple “headache” and its treatment important enough to mention it explicitly in the annals. However, maybe there is no connection between these two events; yet still it may indicate an unstable state of health, which comes to the surface within the source in singular events, as it happened during the assembly in 873.

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The Epic Hagiography as Scriptural Genre and its Pictorial Rendering in the Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe Crypt Frescos

The Metempsychosis of Martyrdom

I Introduction

The frescoes of the crypt at the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-Sur-Gartempe present a rare specimen of a full-scale pictorial hagiographic linear narrative, rather than the habitual brief episodes of martyrdom.¹ Four narrative strips portraying the

1 The rarity of the linear hagiographic narrative in the Saint-Savin crypt can be attested to from a comparison not only with the other Passions within the church of Saint-Savin itself, but also from hagiographic depictions in other crypts in the region and its vicinity: 1. The crypt of the abbey church of Saint Germain at Auxerre in Burgundy, dated to ca. 860, features single episodes from the *vitae* of St. Laurence, St. Stephen, and St. Vincent, see Edward S. King, "The Carolingian Frescoes of the Abbey of Saint Germain d'Auxerre," *The Art Bulletin* 11.4 (1929): 359–75. Pictures featuring scenes from St. Stephen's martyrdom: The Judgment in front of the Sanhedrin and his stoning can be seen on line at <http://www.encyclopedie-universelle.com>, under "Les Arts dans le temps des Carolingiens, Saint-Germain, Auxerre" (last accessed on Oct. 9, 2013); 2. The frescoes in the crypt of Notre-Dame at Montmorillon, Vienne, dated to the end of the twelfth century, feature episodes from the life of St. Catherine; see William M. Hinkle, "The Iconography of the Apsidal Fresco at Montmorillon," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Künste* XXIII (1972): 37–62 (printed in Robert Favreau, *Saint Savin, l'Abbaye et ses peintures murales* (Poitiers: C.P.P.P.C., Connaissance et promotion du patrimoine de Poitou-Charentes, 1999), 138, 3. The murals in the crypts of Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand and Notre-Dame-la-Grande at Poitiers display iconic portraits of saints wearing either crowns of martyrdom or holding a book. The frescoes of both churches are dated to the second half of the eleventh century—contemporary with those of Saint-Savin; see Marie-Thérèse Camus and Claude Andrault-Schmitt, *Notre-Dame-la-Grande de Poitiers: l'œuvre romane* (Paris, Picard, and Poitiers: C.E.S.C.M., 2002), 4. A broader hagiographic program is found in the crypt of Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher (Loire-et-Cher), from the end of the twelfth century, in which the miracles performed by St. Giles are featured; see, Abbé Pierre Renoux and Dom Angelico Surchamp et l'Atelier du Cœur-Meurty, "Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher," *Val de Loire roman*, ed. Jean-Marie Berland, Dom Béningne Defarges, et al. (Saint-Léger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 1956), 155–208. These authors find stylistic resemblance between the murals of Saint-Aignan and those of Saint-Savin; see also, Marcia Kupfer, *The Art of Healing: Painting for the Sick and the Sinner in a Medieval Town* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), figure references, 13. These comparisons were presented by Delia Viola Kottmann, "Les peintures murales de la

martyrdom of Ss. Savin and Cyprien are spread along the northern and southern vaults and walls of the nave and on a single register on the western wall. (Fig.1) Eight iconic portraits of saints cover the apsidal niche in the east, presided over by a *Maïestas Domini* surrounded by the four evangelic symbols.

The detailed full-scale seamless narrative of the legend has triggered scholarly interest in its historical sources. A chronological analysis was carried out by the Bollandist Baudouin de Gaiffier, who concluded that the legend was a fictitious construct, a sort of palimpsest, combining three different legends.² The study of a vast body of hagiographic legends by the Bollandist Hippolyte Delehaye enables us to place the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend within the literary epic hagiographic genre, rather than discarding it as an historical hoax.³ The legend contains all the components of this genre and follows its structural rules, laid out by Delehaye.⁴ However, it retains elements of historicity, moving dialectically between the desire to prove historical authenticity and the need to convey ideological, theological, and mystical content. At the end of his chapter on the hagiog-

crypte de l'abbaye saints Savin et Cyprien à Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe," *Mémoire de MA 2 de Civilisation Médiévale*, Master Thesis, Poitiers, University of Poitiers, U.F.R Human Sciences and Art, 2006, 2–65.

2 Baudouin de Gaiffier, "Les sources de la Passion des SS. Savin et Cyprien," *Analecta Bollandiana* LXXIII.3–4 (1955): 323–41.

3 Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*. Subsidia hagiographica, 13B. 2nd ed. (1921; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1966).

4 Delehaye's division into literary categories and genres has been accepted by researchers as canonical. Attempts to add genres such as the Aretalogical genre—the combined Christian and pagan miraculous legend—have been rejected by scholarship: Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorized Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5. Williams evaluates the Bollandists work as follows: "The emphasis on facts may be considered the traditional approach of the Bollandists; their work has been fundamental to any consideration of hagiography but for some of its limitations see the discussion in Menestò and Barcellona," Williams, *Authorized Lives* (2008), 7; Enrico Menestò and F. Scorza Barcellona, "Presentazione," *Hagiographica* I (1994): vii–xii: see also, the review on Menestò and Barcellona's introduction by David Rollason, "Review of the editorial introduction of *Hagiographica* I. 1994, by Enrico Menestò and F. Scorza Barcellona," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48 (1997): 511–11; Rollason points out that the attempt to open up the hagiographic literature to other disciplines ends up looking much like the Bollandists' research, and basically continues the "idea enunciated by Hippolyte Delehaye." Delehaye also devised the methodological tool of the "hagiographic dossier," which is widely used: see, Meinolf Vielberg, *Der Mönchsbischof von Tours im Martinellus: Zur Form des hagiographischen Dossiers und seines spätantiken Leitbilds*. Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte, 79 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 15.

raphic epic genre, Delehayé suggests that the origin of this genre might be found in the Apostolic Fathers' writings.⁵

Delehayé's suggestion, combined with the extraordinarily full gamut of torture described in the Saint-Savin legend, triggered the idea that it might echo the list of afflictions for which St. Ignatius yearned in his *Epistle to the Romans*. Consequently, in this article I shall demonstrate how the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend and its pictorial rendition follow the rules of the hagiographic epic genre, derived from the apostolic model of the Ignatian *Epistle to the Romans* and the theology of martyrdom therein. I shall also show how the narrative imagery of the Saint-Savin crypt ably encapsulates historicity, theology, and mysticism; while at the same time it reveals the ideological differences between the model from late antiquity and the final literary and visual upshot in the Latin West in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. What arises from a scrutiny of the difference between these two periods is the clear shift from the transubstantiation-Eucharist theology of martyrdom, with its strong emphasis on the martyr's flesh, toward the eschatological theology, with emphasis on the martyr's reward at the End of Days. This paradigm shift is also crucial for an understanding of how the visual depiction of martyrdom was interpreted and used during these two periods.

Connecting the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend to St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans* and studying the latter's mental effects on the cult of the saints, its literature, and its pictorial rendering necessitates probing into the metempsychosis of martyrs and martyrdom. St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans* is a rare first-hand account of the emotional life of a martyr-to-be, his feelings about his own soul and about his own body. He is more than an *exemplum* for martyrdom—he is a true incarnation of martyrdom. St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans* activates, or rather reactivates, a chain, a genealogy of martyrs, fulfilling themselves through seeking total fusion with the flesh and blood of Christ. This idea, in turn, gave birth to the perception of a sacred effigy not as representing the persona of a saint, but as *praesentia*—being the saint in the flesh. Such an effigy of real presence is of a divine origin, not man-made; it is thus, *acheiropoieton* (made without hand). The best known of these effigies are Veronica's veil, the Mandylion of Edessa, and the Shroud of Turin, all of which bear what we would call today the DNA of Christ, and all of them are connected with the Passion of Christ.⁶ In later

⁵ Delehayé, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 3), 226.

⁶ Christopher Wood, *Forgery Replica Fiction, Temporality of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 38; see also Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts: Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen, 2007* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 173–78. See also, Daniel Russo, "Des lettres sur l'image dans l'art du Moyen Âge: Pour une nouvelle articulation du textuel et du

centuries in the Latin West, with the advent of the eschatological thought, the image of the saint becomes conceptualized and idealized, as it ceases to ‘depict’ the actual martyrdom and the physical presence of the martyrs. Now the sacred image represents the future reward at the End of Days.

The shift from the transubstantiation thought on martyrdom in early Christianity to the eschatological thought in later centuries in the Latin West, may be understood by us today as the “sobering up” of Christianity, with the advent of humanism. There are, nonetheless, apparent remnants of the transubstantiation thought in the Latin West, both in the hagiographic literature and in the visual arts, but most of all in the Eucharist ritual and the liturgy.⁷ Many a scholar has tried to understand the mental process by which the “modern” worshipper internalizes the Eucharist-transubstantiation idea.⁸ Modern research has also sought to approach the *Epistle to the Romans* from a modern psychological viewpoint.⁹ However, I have chosen to read this epistle and its derivatives in the most direct way, without attaching to it any of our present day psychological notions or our modern understanding of ecclesiastical politics. I have decided simply to leave it in the realm of the pure personal creed. In this article I show how the hagiographic literature in its scriptural guise and in its historicity tenets, joined by its monumental pictorial rendering, placed in the location of the purported events where the martyrs’ relics are housed, collaborate in heightening the spiritual and emotional experience of the supplicant.

visual,” *Qu’est-ce que nommer?: L’image légendée entre monde monastique et pensée scolastique*, ed. Christian Heck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 127–44.

7 The transubstantiation dogma was first formulated in the Latin West in the mid-ninth century by Abbot Paschasius Radbertus in his treatise, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (831–33), based on Ambrosius. Soon after, however, Scotus Erigena (815–877) expressed adamant opposition to this dogma. See Karl von Hase, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: D. Appleton, 1855), cited from Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types*, trans. Helton Godwin Baynes, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, and William McGuire (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 23.

8 Jung argues that the mental construct behind the transubstantiation is based on the urge to concretize what would otherwise be thought of as a symbol. This construct stems from the yearning of the believer for the actualization of religious miracles by, paradoxically, detaching himself from the purely sensual, namely, from what is perceived by the senses. Thus, the transubstantiation constitutes a transformation of the “accidental” substance of the wine and bread into the blood and flesh of Christ “in truth, in reality and in substance” (*vere, realiter, substantialiter*), while the wine and bread preserve their outer aspect. Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* (see note 7), 23–26.

9 Albert Osger Mellink, “Death as Eschaton: A Study of Ignatius of Antioch’s Desire for Death,” Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 2000, 4: “The Desire for the End” (see below, note 86): 320–43. For more literature on St. Ignatius’s emotional state, see also note 51 below.

II The Legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien

Apart from the poetic text inscribed beneath the imagery of the Saint-Savin crypt, the only known literary evidence for the vitae of Ss. Savin and Cyprien is found in a twenty-eight-page manuscript dated by Prosper Mérimée to the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁰ This manuscript was found in the abbey of Saint Cyprien in Poitiers and is known today as the manuscript of Dom Leonard Fonteneau († 1780) who found and owned it; it is now in the municipal library of Poitiers (LXXX). There are known to be at least two copies of the manuscript.¹¹ The alleged authors of the vitae of Ss. Savin and Cyprien are the priests Asclepius and Valerius, who were the companions of the martyrs. The work is dedicated to Germanus with the words: *sanctissimo praesulum domino Germano*, in the year 458.¹²

The legend, translated from the Latin by Merimée, unfolds as follows: The proconsul Laudicius and his successor, his son Maximus, enforce the cult of Dionysus. The brothers Savin and Cyprien, natives of Brescia (Brixia), renowned for their wisdom and virtue, are dismayed by the Dionysian feasts, and try to persuade their fellow citizens at Amphipolis to abandon idolatry and turn to the true God. In the year 458, Laudicius visits Amphipolis and the townspeople demand that he denounce and execute the Christian brothers. Laudicius summons the brothers and interrogates them. However, Savin, the older brother, does not recant and boldly declares his allegiance to the Christian faith. He even attempts to convert Laudicius himself and berates him for his blindness. When both supplications and threat prove futile, the brothers are handed over to the executioners. First they are suspended from a post and their flesh is torn with metal hooks. When the torturers become exhausted, Laudicius tries again to persuade the brothers to bring an offering to the idol. Savin approaches the statues of Dionysus and makes the sign of the cross. The idols immediately fall off their pedestals and shatter into pieces. Furious, Laudicius orders the brothers to be thrown into a furnace. Engulfed by fierce flames, beneath the vault of the burning furnace, they pray to God and He spares them; even their garments are not consumed by the flames. Suddenly, the flames erupt from the furnace and consume Laudicius himself and one hundred and sixty of his men.

¹⁰ Prosper Mérimée, *Peintures de l'église de St.-Savin, Département de la Vienne* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1845), 15.

¹¹ Indicated by Merimée, *Peintures* (see note 10), as *La vie de Saints Savin et Cyprien*. Bibliothèque de l'abbé, II, 665 (= Trésors de la bibliothèque Mazarine: l'abbé Leblond "second fondateur")

¹² Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina, ed. Société des Bollandistes, Société des Bollandistes (1898–1901), BHL. 7447.

Some days later, Maximus, the son and successor of Laudicius, appears at Amhipolis and the saintly brothers are summoned before him for interrogation. Maximus starts by interrogating Savin, the older brother, who is grand in stature, well built, his features graceful and wholesome, and his spirit poised and sweet. At Maximus's behest, Savin describes his parentage, his education, and his life as a simple clerk. When Cyprien is asked about his identity he expands on details about his lineage and his family's social status: his father, Magnus, he tells Maximus, was three times appointed Consul of Brescia, and their mother is a descendant of a consular family from Campadia. Maximus then pronounces sentence: If the brothers continue to renounce the worship of the idol (Apollo), in spite of their high birth they will be thrown into the arena and left to the mercy of wild beasts.¹³ They are led into the arena, where a ferocious lioness is released and set upon them. She emits a dreadful roar, but then lowers her tail like a submissive dog and licks the brothers' feet. Two more lions are sent to attack them and they too behave in the same docile manner. The spectators howl and grumble wildly, accusing the brothers of practicing witchcraft. Maximus arrests the brothers anew, taking three days respite during which he considers other methods of torture. At the end of this period an angel appears in the brothers' cell and tells them to flee in the direction of Gaul, where they will be rewarded for their faith in God. No sooner has the angel spoken than the walls of the prison split asunder. The brothers flee as they were directed by the angel. The saintly brothers soon find themselves hosted by two Christian clerics, Asclepius and Valerius. They too have escaped persecution and torture, and now they join Savin and Cyprien in their flight to Gaul.

All four fugitives cross the Alps and reach the River Rhône. Their reputation quickly spreads far and wide and people flock to meet them and escort them on their way. The story goes on to tell in detail how St. Savin restores a dead baby to life by evoking Christ's name, causing the infant's mother to embrace Christianity. The saints continue their journey guided by an angel. They pass Lyon, swim across the Saône, and traverse through Burgundy heading toward Auxerre. At Auxerre they meet the glorious Bishop Germain, having just returned from a journey to Scotland and England on a mission to squash the Pelagian heresy, and

¹³ In the Roman Empire execution by wild beasts was reserved for slaves and the low classes. It was implemented against Christians of high birth as a means of dishonoring them. Members of the Roman high classes were executed by beheading. This may explain the pattern of martyrdom that constituted a row of failed intended debasing executions, culminating in beheading, which restored the honor of the martyrs. Kim M. Coleman, "Charades: Roman Staged as Mythological Enactments," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 46–73.

now, at the order of the Pope, he has come back to France to fight the Pelagian heresy in his own territory.¹⁴ A divine revelation causes Germain to send them off on a blessed mission. After they cross the Loire and travel through Tours they find themselves in the territory of Poitou. When the fugitives pause to rest on the banks of the Gartempe, Maximus, with two hundred Italian soldiers, overtakes them.

Just as Maximus is about to catch the brothers a boat appears on the shores of the Gartempe. The saints embark on the boat, which carries them miraculously to the opposite bank of the river. Enraged, Maximus jumps with his troops into the river and tries to swim across, but half of his men drown. Maximus continues his pursuit of the brothers and their companions and finally he arrests them and brings them to an island in the heart of the Gartempe. There, he challenges Savin to perform one of his famous miracles. He presents him with a madman and urges him to exorcize the evil spirits from the madman's body. Savin beseeches God to cure the man and the evil spirits depart from the man's body, accompanied by an appalling stench. The cured man asks to be baptized, and so too do ten of Maximus's men. Furious, Maximus beheads Savin and the ten neophytes and takes Cyprien and his two companions to Antigny. On the same night, the Ides of July, the two companions miraculously manage to free themselves from their chains and find their way back to the island where the body of Savin had been left. They bring him to the *Mount of the Three Cypressess*, where they inter him in the ruins of St. Vincent chapel. Soon after, Cyprien is martyred at the hands of Maximus. The villainous Maximus and the remainder of his satellites then meet a horrific death by divine fury.

III Historicity, Fiction, or Literary Construct—A Critical Analysis

A thorough research of the sources for the Passion of Ss. Savin and Cyprien was carried out by the Bollandist Baudouin de Gaiffier.¹⁵ He deconstructs the narrative and presents a strong case for it being historically inconsistent, constituting a compilation of fragments from the vitae of St. Mocius, the patron saint of Constantinople, the Passion of St. Germain of Auxerre, and that of St. Savinien of Troyes. De Gaiffier contends that the hagiographic text was written by a monk

¹⁴ The historical details are important to mention for the ensuing analysis of the legend as a hagiographic genre.

¹⁵ Baudouin de Gaiffier, "Les sources de la Passion des Ss. Savin et Cyprien," *Analecta Bollandiana* LXXIII (1955): 323–41.

from Poitou, using familiar geography and topography and combining stories from various documents in order to create a convincing historical hagiography for the patron saints of the monastery of Saint-Savin. De Gaiffier argues that using the names of Laudicius¹⁶ and Maximus, as the proconsuls of the time of the Ss. Savin and Cyprien Passion, and locating the story at Amphipolis, point to the Passion of St. Mocius.¹⁷ St. Mocius was Roman by birth and a presbyter in Amphipolis. He was martyred during the reign of Diocletian. Taken to the pagan temple of Dionysus, the saint shattered the idols when he called upon Jesus Christ. He was then thrown into a burning furnace, where he remained unharmed, while the flames from the oven instead scorched the governor. St. Mocius was beheaded in the year 295 C.E.¹⁸ The Greek text of his Passion was translated into Latin before the first half of the ninth century and later incorporated into the *Martyrologium Usuardi Monachii*, largely based on the Martyrology of Bishop Ado of Vienne (Poitou) published in 858.¹⁹

Regarding the involvement of St. Germain d'Auxerre in the vita of St. Savin, this seems to have been derived from several combined sources. In the biography of St. Germain, written by Constance of Lyon at the end of the fifth century, there appears a protagonist by the name of *Sabinus*.²⁰ *Sabinus*, a cleric, sends a distraught pagan who had failed to find solace in the pagan deities, to consult with St. Germain. On route to Auxerre the future catechumen undergoes extraordinary experiences and decides to embrace Christianity. This is the only mention of *Sabinus*, who then definitively disappears from the pages of history.²¹ The hagiographer of Ss. Savin and Cyprien spices his narrative with some historical facts about St. Germain of Auxerre, such as his journey with St. Loup of Troyes to Great Britain to quash the Pelagian heresy. This, however, constitutes an anachronism, as the author dates the Ss. Savin and Cyprien ordeal to *Anno incarnationis Dominicae CCCCLVIII* (458), whereas St. Germain of Auxerre had died ten years earlier, and his journey to Great Britain had taken place around the year 429.²² St. Ger-

16 The name of the proconsul Laudicius in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend is derived from the region of Laodicea where Amphipolis lies; see de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 330.

17 Amphipolis is located in Macedonia and not in the vicinity of Brescia.

18 The Latin text of St. Mocius's passion appears in *BHL*. 6023 based on *BHG*. 1298; see also *Martyrologium Usuardi Monachii*, 270.

19 de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 330.

20 *BHL* 3453; see also, Gustave Bardy, *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps*, ed. Gabriel Le Bras (1950 ; Dijon: les Editions du Bien Public, 1989), 89–108.

21 This story appears under the title: *Libellus de revelatione S. Corcodomi martyris et de conversione S. Mamertini*, *BHL*. 5200, cited from de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 331.

22 de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 332.

main's biographer tells us about the prestige that the saint enjoyed everywhere, and about the miracles he performed along the route of his return to Auxerre. This too might have inspired the narrative of Ss. Savin's and Cyprien's success in evangelizing the pagans, and of the miracles that St. Savin performed along the route of their flight in Gaul.

De Gaiffier goes on to examine the chronicles of the Roman line of emperors and the extent of their commitment to persecuting Christians. He shows how the hagiographer of Ss. Savin and Cyprien locates the story in the year 458, under the reign of Emperor Marcian (*Martiano*), who orders his proconsul to pursue the Christians into the Occident; whereas in reality Marcian had ruled between the years 450–457. He was succeeded by Leo I (457–474), who was never known to have been committed to the persecution of Christians.

A third suspected source found by de Gaiffier is that of the Passion of St. Savinien of Troyes, who “by the order of God” evangelizes the pagans at a time when Christians are being persecuted. After being indicted, he flees to France, where he miraculously crosses a river before being captured and executed by the Roman soldiers.²³ A possible point of interest is that the legend of St. Savinien includes a sister by the name of Savine, or Sabine.²⁴ The cult of Sainte Savine emerged at Saint-Savin at the latest in the latter part of the eleventh century. According to a report by A. Lebrun, one of the six Romanesque altars at Saint-Savin was dedicated to the Saints Agatha, Agnes, Lucie, Savine, and Fercincte.²⁵ The cult of St. Savine could be attested by the stone plates atop the double flight of stairs leading to the crypt at Saint-Savin which are inscribed: S:SAVINE:ORA:PRO:NOBIS. This might explain the confusion between St. Savin and St. Savinien.

In his quest for the true identity of St. Savin, de Gaiffier found the saint's name mentioned for the first time in the *Martyrologium Usuardi monachii*, dated 11th of July, where St. Savin is mentioned as a confessor from the region of Poitou.²⁶

²³ de Gaiffier calls attention to other similar stories, such as that of St. Sidronius of Sens, *BHL* 7702; Georges Verdin in his article “Légendes hagiographiques troyennes,” *Revue de l'histoire des religions* XC (1924): 180–85, argues that the miraculous river crossing legend of St. Savinien stems from the Passion of St. Christophe.

²⁴ *BHL* 7408–12; 7442.

²⁵ P. A. Lebrun, *L'abbaye et l'église de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe* (Poitiers: Oudin, 1888), 113–14; Bélisaire Ledain, “Les inscriptions des autels de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe,” *Bulletins de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest* I (1877–1879): 493–98; cited from Éliisa Maillard, *L'église de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1926), 106–08.

²⁶ *Item, in territorio Pictavensi, sancti Sabini confessoris*: cited from *Martyrologium Usuardi monachii* (Antwerp: Edition P. du Sollier, 1714), 394.

The name St. Savin appears also in the *Acta Sanctorum* and the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, compiled in the sixth century by an anonymous monk in Gaul.²⁷ Another available document is the *Translatio S. Savini*, conserved in a manuscript from the end of the tenth century or the beginning of the eleventh.²⁸ This short document is dedicated to Hucbertus (*Hucberto*), the abbot of the monastery, and his community. It does not relate the vita of St. Savin, who is titled in this document *martyr*, and not *confessor* as he is titled in the *Martyriologium Usuardi monachii*. The *translatio* document reports the discovery of the saint's tomb by a shepherd beneath the rubble of a ruined oratory. The document goes on to praise the generosity of Baïdilis, who pledged to build a basilica to house and revere the remains of St. Savin.²⁹ The author of the *translatio S. Savini* offers an explanation for the saint's "promotion" from *confessor* to *martyr*. According to the document, St. Savin was first revered as a confessor, until a revelation was made to the effect that he was a witness of God, who had spilt his blood for his faith in Christ.³⁰

Now it remains for us to determine how St. Savin's brother, Cyprien, fits into this "palimpsest-cut-and-paste" legend. St. Cyprien appears neither in the *Translatio S. Savini* nor in the *Martyrologium Usuardi Monachii*.³¹ In the legend in Dom Fonteneau's manuscript, the date of St. Cyprien's execution is noted as the 14th of July. This saint's date first appears in the liturgical book in the twelfth century.³² Adémar de Chabannes reports in his chronicles that the King of Aquitaine, Pepin I, son of Louis the Pious (+838), has had built, at the demand of his father, the Monastery of Saint-Cyprien in Poitiers.³³ From a document from the tenth century, conserved in the monastery's archive, we learn that the Monastery of St. Cyprien was rebuilt by Frotier, Bishop of Poitiers, who placed the monastery under the

27 *Martyrologium Hieronymianum ad fidem codicum adiectis prolegomenis, Acta sanctorum novembris LXXXII*, eds. Giovanni Battista de Rossi and Louis Duchesne (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1894), 370.

28 *Translatio S. Savini* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale), Lat. 13220.

29 A count by the name of Badilo of Aquitaine is mentioned in the vita of St. Hugue, the Prior of Anzy-le-Duc, who was previously a monk at Saint-Savin. Count Badilo is also mentioned as belonging to the entourage of Charles the Bald. A count by this name is also known to have restored order at the Abbey of Saint-Martin in Autun: *BHL* 4003–4004. In the manuscript by Dom Fonteneau, relating the vitae of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, Badilo, or Badilius, is not mentioned as a count (*comes*) but as *clericus palatinus*.

30 *PL.*, CXXVI, col. 1054.

31 de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 335.

32 Louis Rédet, ed., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint Cyprien de Poitiers* (Poitiers: Imprimerie de Henri Oudin, 1874), 4–5: *Archives historique du Poitou*, III; de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 335.

33 de Gaiffier, "Les sources" (see note 15), 336.

patronage of the Virgin Mary and St. Martin.³⁴ It is clear that Frotier wished to give the monastery a more weighty patronage than that of the obscure St. Cyprien.

In another document, Frotier reports that he ordered the remains of St. Cyprien to be moved from Antigny, the place where the saint was allegedly martyred and buried, to the new church of the monastery at Poitiers. All we know about St. Cyprien is that since the eleventh century he has been identified as the brother of St. Savin. De Gaiffier postulates that adding St. Cyprien to the legend of St. Savin was a gesture of fraternity between the two monasteries. He suggests that this hypothesis is rendered plausible by the history of both monasteries during the eleventh century.³⁵

The martyrdom of St. Savin was not known to the early Bollandists. The story surfaced in their research only from documents from the mid-fifteenth century, around the time when the Bishop of Brescia, Pierre de Monte (1442–1447), introduced the story of the martyr brothers from France, immediately establishing their celebration in his diocese, their alleged hometown.³⁶ The story was incorporated into the *Acta Sanctorum* after its text was found in the Monastery of Santa-Catherina in Brescia. The author of the commentary on the *Acta Sanctorum*, J. Pinius, wrote a cautionary note in capital letters at the beginning of this text: *Acta suspecta*.³⁷ It is thus clear that the story of Ss. Savin and Cyprien was circulating and functioned in the liturgy in France in the eleventh century. This is attested to in two fragments from liturgical books, mentioning the celebration of the two martyrs: one from the end of the eleventh century found in the Monastery of Saint-Martial in Limoges, about 120 km south of Saint-Savin, and the other from the first half of the twelfth century found in the Monastery of Fontevrault, ca. 120 km north of Saint-Savin.³⁸ The murals in the crypt of Saint-Savin depicting in detail the saintly brothers' Passion offer the strongest evidence of the saints' celebration in the late eleventh century.

³⁴ Rédet, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* (see note 32), 4–5.

³⁵ *Gallia Christiana*, II, col. 1233–1235, 1287–1288, and *La vita de St. Bernard de Tiron*, BHL 1251, cited from de Gaiffier, “Les sources” (see note 15), 338.

³⁶ *Acta sanctorum* (July, III, 1723), 193–198, cited from de Gaiffier, “Les sources” (see note 15), 329.

³⁷ de Gaiffier, “Les sources” (see note 15), 329.

³⁸ The first fragment: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1254; see also Victor Leroquais, *Les Bréviaires manuscrits des Bibliothèques de France*, ed. Victor Leroquais, vol. III (Paris: [Macon, Protat frères, imprimeurs], 1934), 77, and 230–31. The text is from the monastery of Saint-Martial in Limoges. *The Second Fragment*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 13223; see also, *Catal. Lat. Paris*, III, 593. This text was found in the monastery of Fontevrault, cited from de Gaiffier, “Les sources” (see note 15), 329.

The Ss. Savin and Cyprien vitae, as told in the Dom Fonteneau manuscript, is densely filled with details: every personage is given a name, whether historically well-known or not; geography and topography are meticulously treated; details of the protagonists' characteristics and of their lineage are given; Roman customs and legal procedures are described; and the numbers of soldiers, wild beasts, and neophytes are mentioned. It is necessary to sift through this plethora of details in order to extract the essence of the narrative. In order to understand how these details function within the hagiographic literature and its pictorial manifestation, it is also necessary to study the way it is constructed.

IV Reading the Hagiographic Legend

Hippolyte Delehaye sets out the guiding principles for a hagiographic construct.³⁹ Firstly, we should bear in mind that the vita of a saint was constructed generations after his cult had been established and practiced, while in the meantime the saint's biography might have been virtually forgotten. The hagiographic narrative is intended to fill a memory gap in order to keep the cult alive, especially when the saint is associated with a fixed location of worship. Initially, two crucial categories are considered in the construction of the vita: chronology and topography. Hence, the point of departure for the hagiographer is the existing practice of a long-standing cult tradition consisting of the liturgy, such as hymns sung on the saint's date, determined as the date of martyrdom, analogous to his or her date of birth, as registered in the *Martyriologium* literature.⁴⁰ The other category, the topography, covers the location of martyrdom, or in the case of a highly-placed ecclesiastic figure, the location of the saint's see, rather than that of his or her origin. To the topography another element is added: an object, be it a relic, a monument, or a reliquary and their decorations, which are the "less silent" agents in explaining the history of the cult. Other clues for the construction of a plausible vita are collected from documents preserved in the respective local monasteries, such as the *Acta Translationis* and royal and ecclesiastic deeds and consecration documents.⁴¹

³⁹ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genre littéraires* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1966).

⁴⁰ The date of a martyr's death is considered as his real birth date, in that the true life of a martyr commences upon his death in martyrdom.

⁴¹ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique* (Brussels: Société de Bollandistes, 1934), 12–17.

Delehaye discerns a number of types within the vast quantity of hagiographic texts: the *Martyriologium* that serves as an ecclesiastical (local or general) listing of names, dates, and topography, without the vitae of the saints; the *Martyriologium*, in which the listings of names, dates, and topography are accompanied by short vitae, (the most famous representative of this genre is the *Martyriologium Hieronymianum*); the individual historical martyrdom, which can be traced back and verified historically; the legendary “mythico-folkloristic” martyrdom, which is based mainly on topography and tradition; and the pseudo-historical martyrdom, which is basically “mythico-folkloristic,” relying on topography and customs of worship, in the guise of a credible historical martyrdom. What characterizes both, the “mythico-folkloristic” and the pseudo-historical martyrdoms, is the density of narrative details in an attempt to close all possible loop-holes and avoid anything which might sound ambiguous. However, this can also cause the story to be suspected as an invention.⁴²

Delehaye divides the historical and pseudo-historical Passions into two main prose genres: the panegyric and the epic.⁴³ The panegyric genre stems from sermons and eulogies, usually delivered many years after the death of the particular martyr. It is characterized by its exaggeration and embellishment. The epic genre tells a broad story of Passion, compiling details taken from many known historical martyrdoms in order to create an all-encompassing legend. This latter genre has resulted in an almost “industrial mass production.” Delhaye and his Bollandist team have investigated a large body of Passions of the epic genre, deconstructing them and analyzing their individual building blocks.

Delehaye first lists the protagonists: the martyr or martyrs; the judge, be it a magistrate, proconsul, or the emperor; the executioners; and the loyal witnesses accompanying the martyrs. Next, he studies the interrogation carried out by the judge and the ensuing dialogue, which typically develops into a theological dispute between paganism and the Christian creed, ending with a short discourse on the Christian doctrine. This is followed by the prayers of the martyrs, before and during their torture and execution. He then lists the tortures and the execution methods; the martyrs’ miraculous deliverance; and, finally, the miracles which the martyrs themselves perform.⁴⁴

⁴² Delehaye, *Cinq leçons* (see note 41), 10–11.

⁴³ Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 171–73.

⁴⁴ Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 173–218. On the hagiographic construct, see Barbara Abu-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints, Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 33–60.

At the end of his study of the hagiographic epic genre Delehayé concedes that his search for its origin did not provide a satisfactory answer as to who might have been its “founding father.” While he contends that a possible answer may be found in The Book of Maccabees ascribed by Eusebius to Josephus Flavius, he also suggests that the origin of this genre might be found in the Apostolic Fathers’ writings.⁴⁵ Linking the legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien with these writings may assist in extracting the theological and liturgical essence from this detail-laden story. It may also clarify the theological articulations in the pictorial interpretation of the legend.

V In Search of a Model for the Ss. Savin and Cyprien Legend

The question regarding the weight of the historical facts versus that of the theological and liturgical substance within the epic hagiographic genre is vital in our search for the essence of this literature. The need for the hagiographer to negotiate between the factual and the ideological is evident in the legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien. Consequently, the historical inaccuracies are not necessarily proof of lack of erudition. Indeed, an approximate historical synchronicity can be observed. We may presume that in order to give the story an appearance of historical validity, while also incorporating weighty authoritative contemporary ecclesiastical figures, such as St. Germain of Auxerre, the hagiographer had to juggle a timeline which is at odds with the historical facts. This in itself points to the precedence taken by ideology over historicity. It is evident that the hagiographer was familiar with what Delehayé terms the epic hagiographic genre, and probably also with the writings of Eusebius, who was a main player in the development of this genre.⁴⁶

In following Delehayé’s suggestion to search for a primal model for the Western hagiographic literature in the early Christian writings, it is crucial to bear in mind the vast difference between the theological thought of primitive Christianity in the East and that of the eleventh century in the West. Nonetheless, this research strategy enables us, in addition to finding the deep roots of the Passion stories in later Christianity, also to be better able to elucidate the ideological-theological articulations, in both the literary and pictorial forms used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and to be better able to assess the extent of knowledge,

⁴⁵ Delehayé, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 226.

⁴⁶ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Codex Parisinus Graecus 1431. Vellum or Colbert 621. Its composition began at 311; see below note 49 and 56.

drawn from late antiquity, as reflected in the hagiographic legends and their depiction in later Christianity. Throughout the comparisons between these eras it is important to bear in mind that a hagiographic literature *per se* did not exist in primitive Christianity, and that there was no conscious awareness of martyrdom in the same sense as that which existed later on.⁴⁷ The added value of this notion is that when we deal with early Christianity martyrdom, we deal with it in its purest form. This enables us to discern those layers which were added later to the hagiographic literature, as well as to consider those which were omitted. In order to make this comparison workable, however, there is a need to delve into the details of the chosen model.

A compelling model for hagiographic writing can be found in St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans*, in which St. Ignatius, otherwise Theophorus Bishop of Antioch († 117), expresses a detailed wish for his own martyrdom. A martyrdom, which embodies the most perfect form of *imitatio Christi*, even to the point of a total unification with Christ in the deepest Eucharistic sense⁴⁸:

Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see even my body. Supplicate the Lord for me, that through these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God . . . Yet if I shall suffer, then am I a freedman of Jesus Christ, and I shall rise free in Him. (*Rom.*, 4)

. . . May I have joy of the beasts that have been prepared for me . . . Come fire and cross and grapplings with the wild beasts, [cuttings and manglings]. Wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing of my whole body, come cruel tortures of the devil to assail me—only be it mine to attain unto Jesus Christ. (*Rom.*, 5)

The *Epistle to the Romans* along with *Martyrium Ignatii*, are considered to be among the earliest historical sources dealing with Early Christian martyrdom and its underlying theological and liturgical thought. Moreover, in his epistles St. Ignatius attaches himself to the scriptural figure of the Apostle Paul, in whom he sees his ultimate role model.⁴⁹ The epistles to the various communities in Asia Minor and Rome were written during two stops on the road from Antioch,

⁴⁷ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*. Subsidia hagiographica, 20 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1933), 1–4. According to Delehaye, the hagiographic literature became crystalized around the sixth century. Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 224.

⁴⁸ St. Ignatius: *Martyrium Colbertinum* in *Codex Colbertinus Parisensis*—based on the text from the tenth century, *Quatuor Evangelia ante Hieronymum latine translate post editionem Petri Sabatier cum ipso codoce collatam*, ed. Johannes Belsheim (Oslo: A. Cammermeyer, 1888).

⁴⁹ St. Ignatius as one of the Apostolic Father was believed to have been ordained by the Apostles Peter and Paul. According to Eusebius, the Apostles left instructions to appoint Ignatius as the successor to the first bishop of Antioch Evodius. Eusebius, *Church History*, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, III, XXXVI. 2 (1889; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 166.

St. Ignatius's episcopal see, to Rome, where he was to be executed for defying Emperor Trajan's edict against Christian proselytizing.⁵⁰ The epistles appear to have scriptural qualities, in spite of their being written with no apparent pretension to sound biblical. They are formulated with a great deal of humility and broad personal tone. Some scholars find in them an oratorical, sermon-like quality.⁵¹ These qualities of St. Ignatius's epistles may explain the influence and longevity which they have enjoyed, especially in comparison with most of the Apostolic Fathers' writings, such as those of Hermas, Barnabas, and even Clement of Rome.⁵² The *Epistle to the Romans*, which stands out from the other epistles in its vehemence and heroic rhetoric, was incorporated as part of the Acts of Martyrdom, and dubbed by Joseph Barber Lightfoot, a leading scholar of St. Ignatius's writings, "the martyr's manual."⁵³ In Lightfoot's own words:

The earliest direct quotation from Ignatius (Irenaeus of Lyon, V. 28. 4.) is the passage in which he describes himself as the wheat-flour ground fine for the sacrificial offering (Rom. 4). The diction and imagery of martyrology follows henceforth in the tracks of Ignatius. It is quite possible indeed that he himself in many points merely adopted language already familiar when he wrote. All we can say is that among extant writings many thoughts and expressions, current in later martyrologies, occur here for the first time.⁵⁴

50 As could be postulated from the legal questions posed by Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia-Pontus, to the Emperor Trajan, and from the emperor's answer, Trajan's edict forced accused Christians to bring offerings to pagan deities. St. Ignatius had probably been indicted under the following clauses: *accusatio nominis*—belonging to a cult; *flagitia*—a shameful act, namely practicing a cult, inciting others to practice the cult; and *Contumacia*—defying an officer: Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 696.

51 Robert F. Stoops, Jr., "If I Suffer . . . Epistolary Authority in Ignatius of Antioch," *The Harvard Theological Review* 80.2 (1987): 161–78. On the personal tone in the Ignatian epistles, see James Moffat, "A Study in Personal Religion," *The Journal of Religion* 10. 2 (1930): 169–86. Lightfoot describes how both the Ignatian and the Polycarpian epistles were almost canonized, and were entered as a sort of apocryphal scripture by Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (758–828). In his *Stichometria* he listed the writings of 1 Clement 2 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas and the Shepherd. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius and Polycarp*, (New York: McMillan, 1889), 349–50.

52 Robert M. Grant, "The Apostolic Fathers' First Thousand Years," *Church History* 31.4 (1962): 421–29; Peter Meinhold, "Episkope—Pneumatiker—Märtyrer: Zur Deutung der Selbstaussagen des Ignatius von Antiochien," id., *Studien zu Ignatius von Antiochien*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz, 97 (Mainz: Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, 1997), 308–24.

53 Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. J. R. Harmer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967), 60; Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Ignatius and Polycarp* (see note 51), 38.

54 Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Ignatius and Polycarp* (see note 51), 38.

The vita of St. Ignatius, *Martyrium Ignatii*, is attributed to Philo, Deacon of Tarsus and Rheus Agatopus.⁵⁵ Both men accompanied St. Ignatius on his journey to Rome, where after being tried and accused by Emperor Trajan he was to be thrown into an arena in Rome and devoured by wild beasts. In early Christian literature the story of St. Ignatius's Passion is reiterated by Tertullian (155–245), in his *Apologeticum*;⁵⁶ by Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339) in his *Church History*;⁵⁷ and by St. Jerome (347–420) in his *De viris illustribus* (on Illustrious Men).⁵⁸ The account of his Passion by Philo of Tarsus and Rheus Agatopus was accepted by ecclesiastic historians as more or less authentic, as these two individuals are mentioned by St. Ignatius himself in the epistles. However, much more attention has been given by scholars to St. Ignatius's epistles, and in particular to his *Epistle to the Romans*, to the point where it has sometimes been studied as a separate work.

In order to give credence to the claim that the Passion of St. Ignatius could have served as a model for other Passion stories in the Occident, and specifically for that of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, we need to trace the long path it has taken throughout the centuries, from its beginnings until it reached a chronological and geographical proximity to monastic Poitou, the region of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartepe. The starting point is Polycarp's collection of the Ignatian epistles.⁵⁹ Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna and a friend of St. Ignatius, was asked by the latter to safeguard the copies of the epistles, which had been sent to him at the same time they were dispatched to the different communities.

The first appearance of the Ignatian writings in Gaul is around the year 185, owing to Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, who had been taught by Polycarp himself and who maintained close ties with the churches of Asia Minor and Rome. Irenaeus refers to the epistles of St. Ignatius as "letters written by one of us", while the epistle of 1 Clement is referred to as "scriptures."⁶⁰ This might have prompted the more "popular" attention that St. Ignatius's writings were given at the time.⁶¹ Another important conveyer of the vita of St. Ignatius was John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (347–407), who delivered an eloquent eulogy in front of St. Ignatius's relics when they were brought from Antioch to Constan-

55 *Martyrium Ignatii*, ed. Michael Holzmann and Hanns Bohatta (Munich: Joseph Lentner, 1844).

56 St. Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, *Ad martyres*, Cod. Vat. Urb. 64, 50.

57 *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (see note 49), III, XXXVI, 169.

58 St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, XVI, "Ignatius episcopus," ed. Benno Loewy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 1854–1919).

59 According to Lightfoot Polycarp's collection is responsible for the preservation of the Ignatian epistles. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Ignatius and Polycarp* (see note 51), 581.

60 Grant, "The Apostolic Fathers' First Thousand Years" (see note 52), 422.

61 Grant, "The Apostolic Fathers' First Thousand Years" (see note 52), 422.

tinople.⁶² Delehaye sees in Chrysostom's panegyric a source for the tradition of embellishment in later hagiographic literature.⁶³ St. Jerome (347–420) is considered to be the main bridge between the Eastern and Western reference to the Apostolic Fathers. The sixth century saw an increasing interest in St. Ignatius, mainly through the “popular” writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite and Severus of Antioch (459–538).⁶⁴ In the seventh century we find in the eastern monasteries treatises quoting St. Ignatius for both moralistic and antiquarian purposes. Moreover, St. Ignatius remains the only Apostolic Father whose writings were read in monasteries and quoted in sermons. For the aim of the present study, the final station of the Ignatian awareness is no closer to Saint-Savin than Vienne, Poitou. Bishop Ado of Vienne († 874) owned the writings of the St. Ignatius, referring to them and also entering the saint into his *Martyriologium*.⁶⁵ It is thus plausible to postulate that the writings of St. Ignatius and his martyrdom had circulated in the Poitou monasteries. Furthermore, since the Monastery of St. Savin was known for its high intellectual level, one can assume that Ado's writings along with the Ignatian epistles were read there, as interpolated and corrupted as they may have been at that point in time and location.⁶⁶ Coincidentally, the *Acta translationis S. Savini martyris* was drawn up in the first half of the ninth century, during the lifetime of Ado. This is the time when the legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien developed.⁶⁷

An historically closer reference to the St. Ignatius epistles and martyrdom is found in the *Golden Legend*. The description of the tortures suffered by St. Igna-

62 *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, 9, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889), Chapter 5: John Chrysostom's eulogy was also important in the establishment of the tradition of *translatio* of saints' relics. Due to the healing power of the saints, it was considered necessary to transfer their relics to central locations in order for as many supplicants as possible to attain relief for their spiritual and bodily ailments. In the eulogy Chrysostom also speaks about the martyr's reward and their crowning in heaven.

63 Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 168.

64 Grant, “The Apostolic Fathers' First Thousand Years “ (see note 52), 427. See also, *The Antient* (spelling as in the source) *Syriac Version of the Epistles of St. Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians and the Romans, Together with Extracts from the Epistles Collected from the Writings of Severus of Antioch, Timotheus of Alexandria and Others*, ed. and trans. William Cureton (London: Rivingtons and Berlin: Asher, 1845).

65 The Latin version which Ado owns is the interpolation of St. Ignatius; see Grant, “The Apostolic Fathers' First Thousand Years” (see note 52), 429.

66 There are different recensions, caused by branching of the chain of copying the manuscript. Apparently the copy which reached Ado is known to be corrupt.

67 The text of *Acta translatio S. Savini* is conserved in a manuscript, currently in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 13220; *BHL*. 7450.

tius in the *Golden Legend* manifests an interpretation of the saint's list of the desired tortures as if they were actually materialized. The *Golden Legend* also cites a commentary by Bernard de Clairvaux (1090–1153), referring to an epistle written by St. Ignatius to St. Mary, the Savior's Mother. All this illustrates the extent of corruption that the sources had undergone. However, at the same time it explains the choice of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius as a model for the “full-scale martyrdom” in the hagiographic literature and its pictorial interpretation in the eleventh century.⁶⁸

VI Historicity: The Persecution of Christians and the Roman Legal System: Ss. Savin and Cyprien Legend and its Pictorial Interpretation vis-à-vis *Martyrium Ignatii*

In the *Epistle to the Romans* we read:

Supplicate the Lord for me, that through these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God. (*Rom.*, 4) Come fire and cross and grapplings with the wild beasts [cuttings and manglings] wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing of my whole body, come cruel tortures of the devil to assail me. (*Rom.*, 5)

In these passages St. Ignatius lists the tortures he wishes to be inflicted upon him, even though he already knows that he will be thrown into the arena with wild beasts. This reflects the summation of the full scale of tortures. When he says earlier: “Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see even my body” (*Rom.* 4), he expresses his wish for his body to be totally destroyed without trace. In my view, this is the idea that lies behind the multiple tortures in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend.⁶⁹ It may also explain

⁶⁸ “Finally, after this, that he had been tormented by fire, and by beating and prison, the emperor did send for the Romans in a place and there did do set S. Ignatius, and did do bring thither two lions for to devour him . . . It is read that S. Ignatius in all his torments and all the pains of martyrdom that he suffered, that his tongue never ceased to name the name of Jesus.” Quoted from *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, Compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275, ed., F. S. Ellis (London: Temple Classics 1931), 3–8.

⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that the Coptic interpretation of the *Epistle to the Romans* created a Passion that includes the tortures which are alluded to in this *Epistle*: “They put burning coals in his hands and pressed his hands for about two hours. Then they burnt his side with red hot pitch and burning oil. They combed his body with iron combs. When they became tired of torturing him, they cast him in prison where he stayed for a long time. When they remembered him, they brought him out and promised him great rewards and then threatened him. As he was steadfast in his faith, they threw him to the wild beasts and they devoured him and rendered him into pieces.” http://st-takla.org/Full-Free-Coptic-Books/Coptic-Synaxarium-or-Synaxarion_English (last

the reasoning behind what seems to be an assemblage of different Passions, as argued by de Gaiffier.

In the murals of the crypt of Ss. Savin and Cyprien we can see the following allusions to St. Ignatius's text: the hacking of limbs is featured in the scene, where the brothers are hung by their skin from iron hooks; the burning fire is seen in the scene where the victims are thrown into a furnace; the breaking of the bones is seen in the scene where the saintly brothers are threaded through the spokes of the wheels of torture; (Fig. 2–3) and the wild beasts are seen being set upon the brothers.

In spite of the questionable historical timeline given in the legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, as shown by Gaiffier, it does adhere to period details and especially to the customs and legal practices in the Roman Empire. The Roman legal procedures are presented in the epic hagiographic genre and its pictorial interpretation not only in order to give the story an historical appearance but also and expressly to demonstrate the *agón*—the confrontation—between the Christian and the pagan worlds.⁷⁰ This confrontation provides the saints with the opportunity to present the Christian doctrine and show its superiority.⁷¹ Moreover, the hagiographic *agón* embodies elements from the Passion of Christ, as will be shown below.

In the Ss. Savin and Cyprien story, we see that the hagiographer was careful to present an historically accurate legal procedure. In the murals we first see the brothers attempting to evangelize the pagans in Amphipolis. The disagreement between the proselytizing brothers and their pagan opponents is featured as a weighty discussion, signified by energetic hand gestures in the first scene of the cycle. The following scene represents the ensuing legal procedure constituting

accessed on Oct. 12, 2013). Lightfoot notes that the Coptic copies of the Ignatian epistles (written in the Sahidic or Thebaic Egyptian dialect), broke away from the other known critical recensions and hence they are totally mutated: Lightfoot, "Introduction," *The Apostolic Fathers* (see note 52), 60; see also Theofried Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums*. Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, 45 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1980), 45.

70 *Agón* in Ancient Greece signified contest, competition, or challenge in connection with religious festivals. The term is used in 1st Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Delehay in his description of the components of the epic hagiographic genre cites St. Ignatius's *agón* from the *Acta St. Ignatii*, BHG. 814. He lists numerous instances of *agón* such as *Passio St. Taliani Dukae*, BHG. 567; *Passio St. Tryphonis*, BHG. 1856; *Passio St. Georgii*: Karl Krumbacher, *Der heilige Georg in der griechischen Überlieferung*, ed. Albert Ehrhard. Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Philologische und Historische Klasse, 25.3 (Munich: Akademie, G. Franz in Komm., 1911), 4, 127; *Acta St. Silvestri*, BHL. 7725–37.

71 Delehay, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 192–95.

the confrontation between Christianity and paganism. In their legend Ss. Savin and Cyprien are not caught by the authorities but delivered to them by the pagan citizens of Amphipolis. According to Pliny the Younger there was no general round-up of the Christians and only those who were delivered by the citizens to the authorities were brought to justice.⁷² This practice was maintained throughout the history of Christian persecutions by the Roman Empire. The policy of “cautious” persecution was due to the rapid spread of Christianity, causing the authorities to be reluctant to set out on a full-scale massacre.⁷³ Once indicted, the suspected Christians were pressed to renounce their allegiance to Christianity and pledge their loyalty to the emperor by praying and sacrificing to pagan deities. If the accused resisted the pressure and admitted to being a Christian then the charge would be that of *accusatio nominis*: namely, being accused of calling themselves *Christian*, which entailed capital punishment.⁷⁴

The summoning of the brothers in front of the proconsul Laudicius—a single judging high official—is compatible with the Roman legal procedure known as *Cognitio extraordinarem*.⁷⁵ This procedure gave the magistrate, the provincial governor, or even the emperor wide discretion to act according to the current situation.⁷⁶ Capital trials would normally fall under *Cognitio extraordinarem*. In the provinces they would be judged before the provincial governor and no one else. In Rome the trials of Christians, in spite of their being considered capital, would be brought before the *Praefectus Urbi* or a *Praefectus Praetorio*.⁷⁷ Only high profile cases would be brought directly before the emperor himself or the

72 On the letters of Pliny, see Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (see note 50), 696–99.

73 Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (see note 50), 696–99

74 Geoffrey Ernst Maurice de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” *Past & Present* 26 (1963): 6–38.

75 George Mouzourakis, *The Historical and Institutional Context of Roman Law* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2003), 307; see also, Wiesław Mossakowski, “The Introduction of Interdiction of Oral Accusation in the Roman Empire,” *Revue internationale des droits de l’antiquité* 43 (1996): 269–81.

76 de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?” (see note 74), 9. The *Cognitio extraordinarem* is dubbed by Theodor Mommsen in his book *Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipzig: Dunker & Humboldt, 1899): “legalized absence of settled form,” which accounts for the manifold Roman adjudication systems; cited from de Ste. Croix “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?” (see note 74), 12; see also, Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 143–63.

77 *Praefectus Urbi* = A major city deputy. *Praefectus Praetorio* = a deputy above mid-level diocese and low level province: Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity: Everyday Life and Urban Change, AD 312–609* (London: Routledge, 2001), 228; Lesley and Roy A. Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 241.

senate.⁷⁸ In the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend the hagiographer did not neglect to recount the social standing of the brothers. Cyprien tells Laudicius that their father Magnus had three times been elected consul and that their mother was a descendant of a consular family. Their trial by a high officer of the Roman Empire indicates their social standing, thus presenting it as a high-profile legal case.

Similar legal practices are described in the *Martyrium Ignatii*. St. Ignatius was judged in the province by Emperor Trajan himself, who happened to be in the vicinity of Antioch during his military exploits. St. Ignatius's was clearly a high-profile trial as he was the bishop of a main provincial center and the trial's outcome was to serve as an exemplary punishment. In the Ss. Savin and Cyprien murals, as in the legend, the judging high official also oversaw the execution. The *Martyrium Ignatii* recounts how Emperor Trajan personally ordered St. Ignatius's execution.⁷⁹ The execution scenes in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien murals clearly show the proconsuls overseeing the executions, which gives legal endorsement to the punishment procedure.

The *Martyrium Ignatii* as a consummate model for the epic hagiographic legend gives a richly detailed account of his interrogation and trial by Emperor Trajan. During the *agón* the saint berates the emperor for his belief that the *daemons* assist him in his military exploits. Not only does St. Ignatius remain steadfast in his Christian faith, but he also defies a high officer, or in Roman legal terms he commits *Contumacia*.⁸⁰ Such defiance of a high officer of the court appears also in the legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, in which we read that St. Savin sought to convince Laudicius to embrace the true God. In the murals of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, St. Savin is seen arguing with Laudicius using energetic hand gestures. He seems far from assuming a meek and humble posture in front of his judge. This particular point is also supported by the inscriptions beneath the scene, which clearly sound like a rebuke to Laudicius and the pagans in general: COMPOSITO SPONDENT QVONIAM DIIS SACRIFI[CA]RENT (Because they sacrifice to the idols they will be judged).⁸¹ This defiance of a high judging authority is an echo of Jesus response to Pontius Pilate: "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (*John*, 19, 11). In

⁷⁸ De Ste Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" (see note 74), 11.

⁷⁹ *Martyrium Ignatii*, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1, trans., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 6, 129.

⁸⁰ *Martyrium Ignatii*, 1., 2, 129; Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (see note 50), 696.

⁸¹ Delehaye lists numerous passions in which the saints utter eloquent declarations, confessing their faith and rebuking their judges. This characteristic rhetoric is found in both the historical Passions and the epic genre. Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 189–92.

his denouncement of the *daemons of the Nations* St. Ignatius cries: “I have Christ the King of heaven [within me], I destroy all the devices of these [evil spirits].”⁸² This conviction is expressed in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien murals not only by the inscribed rebuke to the idol worshipers, but it is also embodied in the depiction of the miraculous destruction of the pagan idols, at the moment when Christ’s name is uttered by St. Savin.

VII The Seal of Epistolary and Eyewitness Documents

Among the elements of the epic hagiographic genre listed by Delehay, we find the loyal eyewitnesses, who survive to tell the story first hand.⁸³ However, there is more to this aspect than simply giving the related Passion the seal of an authentic document. The choice of the testimonial epistolary form in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien case, as well as in that of *The Letter to the Smyrnæan* relating the Passion of St. Polycarp and the *Martyrium Ignatii*, confers a scriptural quality upon these testimonies. There is always more than one witness, not only for the purpose of strengthening the testimony but as an echo of the multiple accounts of Christ’s Passion by the different evangelists.

The legend of Ss. Savin and Cyprien as it appears in the manuscript of Dom Leonard Fonteneau was allegedly written by the saints’ two companions, Asclepius and Valerius, with an epistolary flair. It is addressed to St. Germain of Auxerre with the salutation *sanctissimo praesulum domino Germano*.⁸⁴ This style of writing seems to echo the Ignatian *Epistle to the Romans*, which contains some allusions to the actual suffering of the martyr on his way to Rome as well as the above-cited list of afflictions which he wished upon himself. Asclepius and Valerius, the alleged authors of the vitae of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, present themselves as the loyal companions and witnesses of the martyrdom ordeals. This, too, mirrors the vita of St. Ignatius, which is attributed to the saint’s companions, Philo, Deacon of Tarsus, and Rheus Agatopus. Asclepius and Valerius accompanied Ss. Savin and Cyprien during their ordeals and flight through Gaul, in a way that is reminiscent of how Philo and Rheus had accompanied St. Ignatius on the long road to his martyrdom in Rome.

In the Ss. Savin and Cyprien crypt murals Asclepius and Valerius can be identified in the first trial scene: the two men are seen sitting on a balcony witnessing

⁸² *Martyrium Ignatii*; *Ante-Nicene*, 1, 2, 129.

⁸³ Delehay, *Les passions des martyrs* (see note 39), 182–83.

⁸⁴ *BHL*. 7447.

the trial taking place before the proconsul Laudicius. (Fig. 4) Two inactive but agitated figures (they lack legs), who could well be the two witnesses, appear in the background of the iron-hooks torture scene. Asclepius and Valerius appear again under the roof of a building behind the saintly brothers in the scene which features the second trial before the proconsul Laudicius. Further on they are seen in the trial before the proconsul Maximus. The Saint-Savin crypt's murals thus clearly adhere to the testimonial tenet of the epic hagiographic genre and specifically to that of the Ignatian model.

VIII The Martyr as Devout Itinerant

Another theological notion that arises from both the hagiographic narrative and the crypt illustrations is that a martyr never seeks to escape his martyrdom; he embodies the willing sacrifice. The main objective of the *Epistle to the Romans* is to dissuade the Roman Christian community from trying to save St. Ignatius from his execution. He wants his fate to be sealed; he is even anxious about those cases in which the wild beasts had refused to attack the condemned:

May I have the Joy of the beasts that have been prepared for me; nay I will entice them that they may devour me promptly, not as they have done to some refusing to touch them through fear. (*Rom.*, 5)

This wish for fulfillment of an ordained fate is an echo of Jesus's response to Pontius Pilate:

I have told you that I am he; if, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled . . . (*John*, 18, 8–9).⁸⁵

In the Passion of Ss. Savin and Cyprien the hagiographer was careful to ascribe all their escapes and deliverances to an angel, to Christ Himself, or to God's order rather than to the saints' own wit. This is manifested in the murals in scenes such as that of the flight through Gaul, in which the saintly brothers are seen escorted by an angel; and that in which when consigned to the flames of the furnace, they are protected and saved by Christ.

The chain of ordeals and deliverances in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien Passion facilitates an itinerant martyr's narrative. The root of such narratives can be found in another important theological thought, which is well expressed in the

⁸⁵ See also, *John* 6, 39.

Ignatian model. The itinerant martyr follows in the footsteps of Christ along his torturous path: from his judgment before the High Priest Caiaphas, and then before Pontius Pilate in the *Hall of Judgment* and in the *Pavement*; through the mockery with the crown of thorns; the flagellation, the bearing of the cross along the streets of Jerusalem to Golgotha; and finally to his Crucifixion (*John*, 18–19). This torturous path represents a significant idea that underlies the itinerant martyrdom: namely, the gradual liminal passage into the realm of light. St. Ignatius in his *Epistle to the Romans* says: “The pangs of new birth are upon me,” through which he is to attain “the pure light” (*Rom.*, 6). In light of the above, we may now understand the Passion of Ss. Savin and Cyprien, as we do that of St. Ignatius, in scriptural terms, relocated from the historical or pseudo-historical narrative to constitute a theological *exemplum*.

IX The Eucharist and the Eschatological Concepts of Martyrdom

The Ignatian model presents a multifaceted *Imitatio Christi*, even though some scholars argue that rather than an “external behavioral” *imitatio*, St. Ignatius understands himself as being *Alter Christus*.⁸⁶ In his writings, St. Ignatius makes it clear that he wishes to be totally unified with Christ in the deepest Eucharist Transubstantiation sense:

I am God’s wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts that I may be found pure bread [of Christ]. (*Rom.*, 4) I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ who was of the seed of David; and for a drought I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible (*Rom.*, 7).⁸⁷

St. Ignatius, however, speaks about the imitation of Christ in its more simple sense: “Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God” (*Rom.*, 6). Albeit he also mentions a reward: “. . . for the beginning is verily well ordered, if so be I

⁸⁶ Mellink, “Death as Eschaton” (see note 9), 320–43.

⁸⁷ In his treatise *De synodis* Athanasius of Alexandria (298–373) deals critically with the Christological language used in St. Ignatius’s epistles, in which he labels the Ignatian rhetoric “double edged”: Grant, “The Apostolic Fathers’ First Thousand Years” (see note 52), 425. The “double edge” refers to St. Ignatius’s rhetoric which veils its propensity toward Monophysitism. For our purposes, with this rhetoric in the *Epistle to the Romans* St. Ignatius expresses his burning desire for total unification with Christ, while recognizing Christ’s body as solely divine and thus denying the two natures of Christ. This idea is deeply embedded in the spirit of his martyrdom. The total unity with Christ in martyrdom binds martyrdom with the Eucharistic transubstantiation.

shall attain unto the goal, that I may receive mine inheritance without hindrance” (*Rom.*, 1).

The Eucharist transubstantiation theology of martyrdom, as elucidated through St. Ignatius’s writings, is by and large alien to the thought behind the hagiographic constructs in the Latin West. However, as will be shown below, vestiges of the Eucharist transubstantiation theology remain in later hagiography in the Occident, which suggests its being constructed on the Ignatian model. Evidently, in later hagiography in the Latin West there is a shift toward the eschatological theology, with emphasis on the reward given to the martyrs at the End of Days and on the empowerment of the saints as advocates for the common sinner at the Last Judgment. This can be attested to in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien crypt iconic portraits, where the martyrs appear with their crown of martyrdom, as well as in the axial apsidiole projecting from the ambulatory of the church, where the motif of crowning the martyrs repeats itself above every iconic sacred portrait. The empowerment of the saints as advocates for the sinners can be read from the inscriptions on the stone plates above both flights of stairs leading to the crypt: S: SAVINE:ORA:PRO:NOBIS. The key to this underlying eschatological idea is given in the inscriptions around the *Maiestas Domini* in the vault of the crypt’s apse:

DAT SANCTIS DIGN[AS MIRABILI] SORTE CORONAS
[S]I[T CLAR]RUS INDEX MERITORUM SPLENDIDUS INDEX

*He will bestow the crowns upon the worthy saints for their glorious deeds: As He was a splendid guide, so will He be judging their merit*⁸⁸:

Vincent Debiais, in his comprehensive study on the epigraphy in the Church of Saint-Savin, calls the *Maiestas Domini* inscriptions *hyper-sacralisation*—bestowing sanctity upon the martyrs on a grand scale.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ My translation. Favreau, “Inscriptions de l’église de Saint-Savin,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiéval* XIX (1976): 9–37 (1976), 104. The reconstruction of the lacunae in the text is indicated by square brackets were done by Robert Favreau according to the rules of meter and rhyme of the Leonine-hexameter. The Leonine hexameter is a verse consisting of two hemistiches: the first hemistich is the antecedent comprised of six syllables ending in a caesura, which rhymes with the last syllable of the second hemistich—the consequence. The second hemistich is usually longer than the first one.

⁸⁹ Vincent Debiais, “Du sol au plafond: Les inscriptions peintes à la voute de la nef dans la crypte de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe,” *L’image médiévale: fonctions dans l’espace sacré et structuration de l’espace culturel*, ed. Cécille Voyer and Éric Sparhubert. Culture et société médiévales (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 301–23.

X Polysemy and Style as “Content of Memory”

The decorative program of the Ss. Savin and Cyprien crypt is an excellent example of the capacity of the well-organized imagery to encapsulate a wealth of meanings and functions. This capacity of the image is analogous to the linguistic polysemy of meaning; i.e., a semantic branching out from an expression, grasped through cognitive processes of analogy and metaphor.⁹⁰ Mary Carruthers and Hans Belting have shown how imagery harbors multiple meanings as if in a single shell and how it can evoke complex associations.⁹¹ This capacity is clearly manifest in the crypt murals: they contain the broad epic hagiographic narrative; past and present theological thought; and mental, spiritual, and emotional stimuli for the supplicant.

The term “content of memory” was coined by Hans Belting to indicate the use of imagery for complex temporal memory, as opposed to Pope Gregory’s idea of imagery as a means to enlighten the illiterate.⁹² The content of memory does not resort only to the practice of sign evocation but also looks into the actual substance of recollection. This is motivated by temporal orientation, i.e., moving between the recollection of past history and the entailed promise for the future. In the Saint-Savin crypt murals the “content of memory” clearly directs the worshipper to apostolic times, by giving scriptural and theological weight to the narrative. At the same time, there is a strong emphasis on the future reward awaiting the martyrs at the End of Days. The Eucharist notion found at the core of Early Christian martyrdom is alluded to in the furnace scene. Christ’s outstretched arms over the kneeling saintly brothers is more than a gesture of protection; it constitutes a kind of common martyrdom—a melding of the flesh—in which a total sharing with Christ’s Passion transpires. This matches the Ignatian Eucharist-transubstantiation theology of martyrdom. Moreover, this scene evokes the description of the burning of St. Polycarp at the stake in Smyrna some 40 years after the martyrdom of St. Ignatius. We read in *The Letter of the Smyrnæans*, written by an eyewitness:

⁹⁰ Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” *The Art Bulletin* 73.2 (1991): 174–76; see also, Meyer Schapiro, “On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image Signs,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 6.1 (1972–1973): 9–19.

⁹¹ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought, Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁹² Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 10–11. One also has to bear in mind that the Saint-Savin decorative program is highly complex and erudite, and therefore cannot be considered as a “picture book for the illiterate.”

And, a mighty flame flashing forth, we to whom it was given to see, saw a marvel, yea and we were preserved that we might relate to the rest what happened. The fire, making the appearance of a vault, like the sail of a vessel filled by the wind, made a wall round about the body of the martyr; and it was there in the midst, not like flesh burning, but like [a loaf in the oven or like] gold and silver refined in a furnace . . . (*Smyr.*, 15).

However, the Eucharist in the eschatological climate of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was articulated more as liturgy than as total fusion, flesh and blood, with Christ. Congruently, in this era martyrdom was seen as behavioral *imitatio Christi* rather than the Ignatian *alter Christi*. In other words, a martyr behaves *like* Christ, rather than *becoming* Christ. This shift of emphasis from the transubstantiation idea to the liturgical practice is manifested in the scene depicting the beheading of St. Savin, where he is seen holding an overturned baptismal jug. Daniel Russo suggests that the jug held in the saint's hand in his final hour can be seen as the sacred chalice used during the Eucharist ritual, and not only as his last action, baptizing the Roman soldiers.⁹³ The emphasis on the liturgical value of the Eucharist in the Latin West represents a "softer" attitude than the burning desire for total fusion with Christ's flesh, as acutely expressed in St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans*.

Both the historicity and the choice of the artistic style in the Ss. Savin and Cyprien crypt reflect more than mere factual substantiation and aesthetic taste. These are clearly external manifestations of a deeper reference, precisely as the hagiographic narrative construct covers historical, theological, and mystic references. The strong tendency toward the Byzantine and late antiquity styles suggests an intention to link the later martyrdom narratives of the Latin West with the dawn of Christianity and early martyrdom.

Linda Seidel suggests that Romanesque art, when "going east" toward late antiquity, does so hand-in-hand with the literary and with rhetoric.⁹⁴ Henry Maguire demonstrates the mental interchangeability between the rhetoric and the pictorial style.⁹⁵ In his exegesis on the hagiographic rhetoric in Byzantium and the influence of orations and *ekphrasis* on the imagery and vice versa, he quotes from Basil of Seleucia's sermon on the 40 soldier martyrs who were doomed to trial by freezing in a lake:

⁹³ Russo, "Des lettres sur l'image dans l'art du Moyen Âge" (see note 6), 143.

⁹⁴ Linda Seidel, "Rethinking "Romanesque": Re-engaging Roman[z]," *Gesta* 45.2 (2006): 109–23; here 110–12.

Linda Seidel, "Constantine and Charlemagne," *Gesta* 15.1.2 (1976): 237–39.

⁹⁵ Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 34–42.

... as if in a picture . . . For the brave deeds of war often supply subjects for both speechwriters and painters. Speechwriters embellish them with their words, painters depict them on their panels, and both have led many on to acts of bravery. For what spoken narrative presents through hearing, this silent painting shows through imitation.⁹⁶

Basil of Seleucia († 460), the orator, actually instructs the artist to imitate his rhetoric and, moreover, he claims that both the spoken word and the picture will have an influence on the human action. Maguire goes on to show how the Byzantine martyrdom descriptions in orations and *ekphrasis* tended to be highly graphic, matching the extremely violent and emotion-triggering visual depictions of martyrdom.

In his search for the roots of the Byzantine graphic rhetoric, Maguire cites from *Declamations* by the rhetorician Seneca the Elder (54 B.C.E.–39 C.E.). Seneca speaks about the skilled orators of the early Roman Empire who laced their speeches with lively descriptions of various tortures. The graphic descriptive rhetoric style of Antiquity is also reflected in the vivid depictions of torture in St. Ignatius's *Epistle to the Romans*:

Come fire and cross and grappling with wild beasts Cuttings and manglings, wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing my whole body, come cruel tortures of the devil to assail me. (*Rom.*, 5)

While the rhetoric of torture in Antiquity and in the budding Christian hagiography in the East is often formulated as a skilled *ekphrasis*, *The Epistle to the Romans* is a first-hand reflection. The ekphrastic rhetoric approaches the description from an “objective” viewer’s vantage point; whereas in *The Epistle to the Romans* the speaking voice comes from within the tortured body itself. The “cuttings, mangling, wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing of the body” (*Rom.* 5), all become nearly audible from within the body of the speaker. From the perspective of *The Epistle to the Romans*, the ekphrastic-rhetorical account of martyrdom remains an “imitation,” insofar as the depiction of it is an imitation, as contended by Basil of Seleucia. Thus *The Epistle to the Romans* can be conceived as a primeval source of the hagiographic narrative, even though it was derived from an environment that nurtured high rhetorical skills.

The detailed description of torture and its depiction in the East is well matched with the Eucharistic view of martyrdom in Early Christianity. Referring to the actual flesh of the martyr persisted in the Byzantine world, whereas in the Latin Occident it was greatly modified. The vestiges of the eastern Eucharist

⁹⁶ St. Basil, *On the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia*, ed. Paul Maas and Constantine Athanasius Trypanis, 1, 5, cited by Maguire, *Art and Eloquence* (see note 95), 41.

view of martyrdom, however, were retained in the Romanesque period as stylistic references to the Byzantine style, employed as signifiers rather than as an aesthetic choice. This is also reflected in the shift from the naturalistic classical form to the schematic structure, which serves better as an “organizer” of ideas and symbols—for *brevitas* as a mnemonic device.⁹⁷ The Saint-Savin crypt murals are exemplary in displaying both the references to its hagiographical origin and its cultural and ideological environment, and the “modern”, perfectly organized symbolic system.

XI Epilogue

This article has shown how the full gamut of martyrdom afflictions, to which St. Ignatius aspires in his *Epistle to the Romans*, most likely inspired the epic hagiographic genre and its faithful pictorial rendition in the crypt of Saint-Savin. It has also been demonstrated how the theology of martyrdom, which is immanent in the *Epistle to the Romans*, permeated the Ss. Savin and Cyprien legend and its pictorial interpretation. This transpired in spite of the fact that during the period when the images in the crypt were created the theology of martyrdom had already shifted from the transubstantiation-Eucharist notion of the martyr’s flesh to the eschatological thought which stressed the martyrs’ reward at the End of Days. This also meant that in the Latin West of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the *imitatio Christi* became “behavioral” imitation, rather than total unification with Christ—flesh and blood—as expressed so vehemently by St. Ignatius in his epistle.

The *Epistle to the Romans* is written with deeply felt personal emotion. However, the narrative pictorial strips of the saints’ *vitae* in collaboration with the distilled *praesentia* of the saints in the sanctuary, place Ss. Savin and Cyprien in the realm of the universal idea of martyrdom, rather than in their particular individual sphere. They are presented as an *exemplum* of martyrdom. Thus, St. Ignatius is a personal mentor, of sorts, for an idealized martyrdom.

This article has also shown how references to early Christianity and early martyrdom are made through historicity and formal affinity to late antiquity and Byzantine styles. However, from a contemporary functional point of view, the coherent structure of the decorative program of the crypt, with its high eloquence, guides the supplicant through both cognitive and spiritual stages of devotion. The allusion to the Ignatian transubstantiation aspiration for total union with

97 Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (see note 91), 60–66.

Christ may have seemed an unattainable lofty ideal to the eleventh and twelfth centuries' devotees. However, it does confer upon the narrative a scriptural authority. The eschatological reward, promised in the inscriptions around the *Maestas Domini* above the sacred portraits, would probably have constituted a more attainable ideal for the contemporary supplicant. (Fig. 5)

DAT SANCTIS DIGN[AS MIRABILI] SORTE CORONAS
[S]I[T CLAR]RUS INDEX MERITORUM SPLENDIDUS INDEX

He will bestow the crowns upon the worthy saints for their glorious deeds: As He was a splendid guide, so will He be judging their merit

The layout of the entire decorative program of the Saint-Savin crypt, including the icons of the saints, the hagiographic narrative strips, the epigraphy, and the ornamentation, works cohesively to construct a well-made narrative that not only covers the broad weave of the epic hagiographic genre, but also constitutes a theological exegesis and provides spiritual and emotional intensification. Typical of the Romanesque conceptual artistic expression, this is achieved by means of strictly prescribed form and style, which is analogous to a meticulous choice of vocabulary and structure in a literary oeuvre of a particular genre; however, with the advantage of the inherent *brevitas* of the visual expression.⁹⁸ Moreover, it ordains a ritual *ductus*,⁹⁹ through the order of reading which leads the supplicant to the shrine in the eastern apse of the crypt—the apex of sanctity—where he would worship and “interact” directly with the martyrs, who will, in turn, intervene in his favor before Christ the judge on the Day of Judgment.

⁹⁸ Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (see note 91), 60–66.

⁹⁹ Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (see note 91), 208.

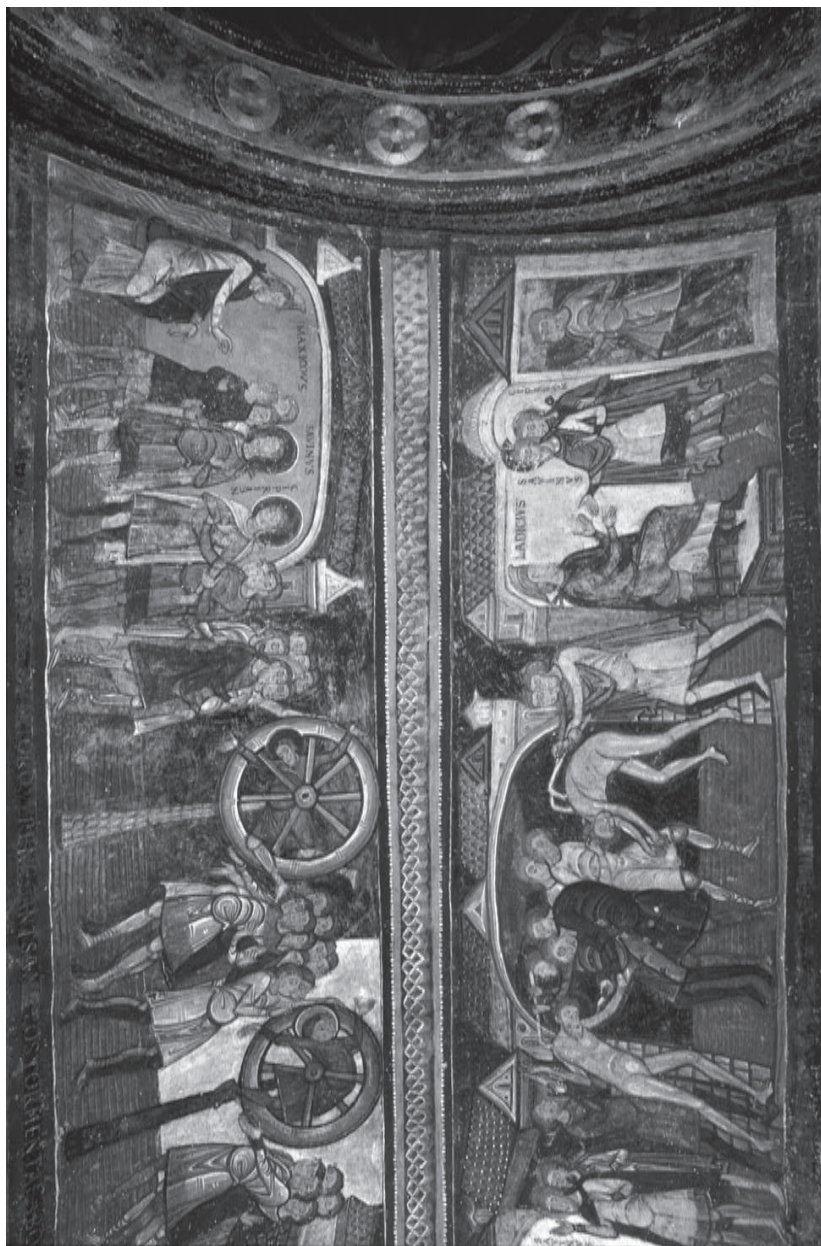


Fig.1: Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, the Crypt's vaults, Upper Registers (Northern and Southern): The trials and ordeals of Ss. Savin and Cyprien



Fig. 2: Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, the Crypt's vaults, Upper Register, South, Details: Torture by the Breaking Wheel.



Fig. 3: Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, the Crypt's vaults, Upper Register, South, Details: Torture by the Breaking Wheel.



Fig. 4: Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, the Crypt's vaults, Upper Register, North: Trial in front of Proconsul Laudicius, Two Companions Appear in the Balcony on the upper left



Fig. 5: Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, Vault of the Crypt's Apse: *Maestas Domini*, Inscribed with the Promise of Reward to the Martyrs

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***Buile Shuibhne: vox insaniae* from Medieval Ireland**

“False tales are, first of all, tales, and tales, like myths, are always persuasive.”
– Umberto Eco.¹

The medieval Irish tale *Buile Shuibhne*² (The Fury of Suibhne) relates how the pagan king Suibhne, having injured the honor of the holy man Rónán Fionn,³ is cursed by that saint and, as a consequence, loses his reason and military credibility on the field of battle. The text goes on to treat the psychological and physical devastation caused by the fall from grace that leaves him transformed into a levitating bird-like creature whose sole refuge from those pursuing him are the treetops. Doomed to spend the remainder of his life wandering the mountains and glens of Ireland and Scotland in a state of acute mental anguish, he is forced to perform public penance while enduring the social humiliation of public solitude. However, after an unspecified number of years, in an inversion of the hostile contact between saint and sinner with which the narrative begins, Saint Mo Ling, by accommodating Suibhne’s foolish wanderings, allows Suibhne to end his days as a *naoimhgheilt* or holy madman, to receive absolution, and to go to his heavenly reward.

1 Umberto Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 25.

2 The tale awaits a modern-day edition although the two produced by O’Keeffe are generally speaking fairly adequate: James George O’Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne): Being the Adventures of Suibhne Geilt. A Middle-Irish Romance* (London: Irish Texts Society, 1913); and James George O’Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1931). All references, by paragraph (§), are to the 1913 edition and translation. The use of digital copies of this edition, as well as of other texts, from those prepared by the Corpus of Electronic Texts project of University College Cork (www.ucc.ie/celt) is gratefully acknowledged. All biblical references are to the King James Bible, courtesy of www.biblegateway.com. The abbreviation DIL is used for E. G. Quin, ed., *Dictionary of the Irish Language Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983), now available in a revised and expanded edition known as eDIL at www.dil.ie (last accessed on March 25, 2014).

3 A note on orthography: while certain terms such as *Dál nAraidhe*, *gealtacht*, *Gleann Bolcáin*, *Cath Muighe Rath*, and so on are normalized to a Classical Modern Irish standard orthography, all other Irish citations (including initials of poems) are left as they are in the source from which they are extracted. By way of clarification, the linguistic term Classical Modern Irish refers to the literary standard used for official poetry in the pan-Gaelic world during the Early Modern Irish period, i.e., from circa 1200–1600. Apart from those of *Buile Shuibhne*, which are O’Keeffe’s, all translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

While the tale's parallels with that of the Old Testament king Nebuchadnezzar have been discussed by William Sayers,⁴ scholars have largely preferred to eschew such avenues of investigation in favor of seeing in the text evidence for more exotic and primitive themes such as shamanism,⁵ the Lolkien legend,⁶ the holy anchorite,⁷ or the *Céli Dé* movement of the eighth century.⁸ Modern writers such as T. S. Elliot, Flann O'Brien, and Seamus Heaney have found in it a source of inspiration for their own literary creations.⁹ There are many aspects¹⁰ of the

⁴ William Sayers, "Varia VII: The Deficient Ruler as Avian Exile: Nebuchadnezzar and Suibhne Geilt," *Ériu* 43 (1992): 217–220.

⁵ See Brigit Beneš, "Spuren von Schamanismus in der Sage »Buile Suibhne«," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 28 (1960–1961): 309–34; David J. Cohen, "Suibhne Geilt," *Celtica* 12 (1977): 113–24. For further discussions, see Alexandra Bergholm, "Academic and Neopagan Interpretations of Shamanism in *Buile Suibhne*: A Comparative Approach," *Studia Celtica Fennica* 2 (2005): 30–46.

⁶ James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955), 385–93.

⁷ For a discussion, see Alexandra Bergholm, "Folly for Christ's Sake in Early Irish Literature: The Case of Suibhne Geilt Reconsidered," *Studia Celtica Fennica* 4 (2007): 7–14.

⁸ Nora K. Chadwick, "Geilt," *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 5 (1942): 106–53; here 113.

⁹ Annette Peht, "From Tree to Poetree: Rewritings of Buile Shuibhne in the Twentieth Century," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 15 (1995): 162–74.

¹⁰ Despite the fundamental connection of the tale's hero with mental instability, *Buile Shuibhne* has never been examined for what it might tell us about attitudes toward mental illness among the aristocratic and educated classes of medieval Ireland, from whose midst the tale originated. Any such investigation might begin by enquiring as to the nature of the condition that afflicted Suibhne. The description that we find in the text, with its echoes of the *ríastrad* suffered by Cú Chulainn (see Cecile O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster* [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967], ll. 2262–94), suggests a transformation that leaves the protagonist in a state of uncontrollable palsy: "Ó rochomhracsiot iarum na catha cechtarrdha robhúiset an damhradh dermháir adíu & anall amail dámha damhghoire co tuargaibhset trí tromghaire ós aird. Ó'dchúala thrá Suibhne na gáire móra sin & a fhuamanna & a freagartha i néllaibh nimhe & i fraightibh na firmaminnte rofhéich Suibhne suas iarum co rolíon nemhain & dobhar & dásacht & fáoinnel & fúalang & folúamain & udmhaille, anbsaidhe & anfhóistine, miosgais gach ionaid ina mbíodh & serc gach ionaidh noco roichedh; romheirbhlighset a meóir, rocrióthnaighsiot a chosa, roluathadh a chroidhe, roclódhadh a chédfadha, rosaobadh a radharc, rotuitset a airm urnocht asa lámhuibh co ndeachaidh la bréithir Rónáin ar gealtacht & ar geinidecht amail gach n-ethaid n-ærdha." i.e., "Thereafter, when both battle-hosts had met, the vast army on both sides roared in the manner of a herd of stags so that they raised on high three mighty shouts. Now, when Suibhne heard these great cries together with their sounds and reverberations in the clouds of Heaven and in the vault of the firmament, he looked up, whereupon turbulence (?), and darkness, and fury, and giddiness, and frenzy, and flight, unsteadiness, restlessness, and unquiet filled him, likewise disgust with every place in which he used to be and desire for every place which he had not reached. His fingers were palsied, his feet trembled, his heart beat quick, his senses were overcome, his sight was distorted, his weapons fell naked from his hands, so that through

text to claim our attention, of which the most striking are the author's skillful interweaving of fact and fiction in creating the fictionalized reality that is *Buile Shuibhne*, and the compassionate supremacy afforded in the text to the voice—at once heroic, at once mentally ill, always human—that dominates so much of the narrative.

A convenient point of departure is the apposition between the fictionality of Suibhne on the one hand and the historicity of the battle with which the author of *Buile Shuibhne* connects him. Suibhne is described as the son of a certain Colmán Cúar, and as ruler of the historical kingdom of Dál nAraidhe.¹¹ This is stated in such a matter of fact manner as to suggest that he had been a real and living figure, so that his fictionality only becomes apparent by an examination of our surviving genealogical records where neither he nor his father are anywhere to be found.¹² On the other hand, the battle of Magh Rath,¹³ in which he is made to

Ronan's curse he went, like any bird of the air, in madness and imbecility." (O'Keeffe, *The Frenzy of Suibhne*, § 11). Another but different description of the moment Suibhne lost his reason is found in *Cath Muighe Rath* (John O'Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na n-Gedh, and The Battle of Magh Rath*, 231–37). Documentary evidence for the existence of the mentally ill (and, to a lesser extent, for their rights and legal status) is to be found primarily in legal texts, but they also feature in narrative texts, and in saints' lives of all periods. Two of these legal texts (dated to the eighth century), *Bretha Crólige* (Daniel A. Binchy, "Bretha Crólige," *Ériu* 12 (1938): 1–77) and *Bretha Déin Chécht* (Daniel A. Binchy, "Bretha Déin Chécht," *Ériu* 20 (1966): 1–66) deal with the legal rights and responsibilities of the ill, among whom are included those with psychological afflictions.

A third text, *Do Drúthaib, Meraib ocus Dásachtaib* (i.e., Concerning Fools, Idiots, and Lunatics), offers a remarkable insight into the understanding of mental illness at the time of its compilation, in the ninth century. It has been printed by Daniel A. Binchy, *Corpus iuris Hibernici: ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum / recognovit D. A. Binchy*, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978), at 1276.18–1277.13, and edited by Roland Smith, "The Advice to Doidin," *Ériu* 11 (1932): 68–72. This late Old Irish tract, the title of which contains the three terms most commonly used for the mentally unsound in the period before 1200 (but not the term *geilt* it will be noted), concerns itself with the law pertaining to land possessed by persons of unsound mind (Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2009], 93). It constitutes the most significant source on the subject to have survived from the early medieval period in Ireland.

11 The kingdom of Dál nAraidhe was roughly coterminous with modern-day south Antrim / north Down in northeastern Ireland.

12 Francis J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 113, refers to Suibhne as a "totally fictitious king," while Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend and Romance—An Encyclopaedia of the Irish Folk Tradition* (London: Ryan Publishing, 1990; New York: Prentice Hall 1991), 395, notes: "That this Suibhne was not a historical personage is strongly suggested by the fact that he does not appear in the genealogies of Dál nAraidhe, and neither is he mentioned in the earlier accounts of the battle of Magh Rátha [sic]."

13 Background information to the battle will be found in *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe. Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1995), n. 206 and n. 362.

feature, appears to have been a historical battle (fought at a place now known as Moira, outside modern-day Belfast) if we are to give credence to the various entries pertaining to it in non-contemporary annalistic sources *sub annis* 637 or 639. These entries make no reference to the fictitious Suibhne but are, however, independently confirmed in Adamnán's *Vita Columbae*, a near-contemporary source dated to some time around 697.¹⁴

The *Annals of Tigernach*¹⁵ record the battle, *sub anno* 639, as follows: “Cath Muighe Rath ria n-Domnoll mac Aeda & ria macaib Aeda Sláine—sed Domnall regnauit Temoriam in illó tempore—in quo cecidit Congal Caech rí Ulad et Faelchu cum multis nobilibus, in quo cecidit Suibne mac Colmaín [sic] Cuair,” i.e., “The battle of Moira gained by Domhnall son of Aodh and by the sons of Aodh Sláine—but Domhnall ruled Temoria at that time—in which fell Congal Caech king of the Ulaid and Faolchú with many nobles, among whom fell Suibhne son of Colmán Cuar.”

According to that source and the tradition preserved therein, Suibhne did not flee from the battle but *died* in the battle. That the form *cecidit* in the annals can here only mean “fell” (in the sense “perished, died”) is apparent from its use earlier in the same entry and by its general use in the Irish annals in this sense. The verb *do-tuit*, the Irish equivalent of *cadō*, is also generally used to render this meaning. Such an account is of interest as it suggests that the tradition of Suibhne's flight into madness in the wake of the battle was unknown to the originator of the entry, or else that he ignored or suppressed what becomes a fundamental ingredient of the later tradition as found in *Cath Muighe Rath*¹⁶ and in *Buile Shuibhne* itself.

However, in another set of annals, *Chronicum Scotorum*,¹⁷ *sub anno* 637, all reference to Suibhne is omitted: “Cath Maighe Rath ria n-Domhnall mac Aedha oculus ría maccoibh Aedha Sláine, (sed Domnall mac Aedha regnauit Temoriam in illo tempore), in quo cecidit Congal Caech Rí Uladh, oculus Faelchu mac Airmeadhaigh Rí Mídhe, i ffríthghuin, cum multis nobilibus,” i.e., “The battle of Mag Roth gained by Domhnall, son of Aed, and the sons of Aed Slaine, (but Domhnall, son of Aedh, ruled Temhair at that time); in which Congal Caech, king

¹⁴ Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona* (see note 13), 55.

¹⁵ *The Annals of Tigernach*. An unpublished edition and translation available at <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100002A/index.html> (last accessed on March 25, 2014).

¹⁶ John O'Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na n-Gedh, and The Battle of Magh Rath, an Ancient Historical Tale* (Dublin: Irish Archaeological Society, 1842)

¹⁷ *Chronicum Scotorum. A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135; with a Supplement Containing the Events from 1141 to 1150*, ed. and trans. William M. Hennessy. Roll Series, 46 (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), 85.

of Uladh, and Faelchu, son of Airmedhach, King of Midhe, were slain in the heat of battle, together with many chieftains.”

Interestingly but hardly surprisingly, a further pair of annals, of which the first is probably the oldest of all surviving, make no mention of Suibhne either but merely record the occurrence of the battle: “Bellum Roth & bellum Sailtire in una die facta sunt,”¹⁸ i.e., “The battle of [Magh] Rath and the battle of Sailtír were fought the same day,” and “Cath Roth i torchair Congal Caech,”¹⁹ i.e., “The battle of Roth, in which Congal Caech fell.” The contradictory character of the annalistic sources, apart from reflecting different times of composition, also suggests confusion on the part of those making the entries regarding the veracity or otherwise of the event. They seem unsure or unaware of Suibhne’s role in the battle of Mag Rath, thus in some he is mentioned, in others he is not, while in one set he is actually recorded as perishing in the battle. This lends further weight to the likelihood of Suibhne’s fictional origin.

Looking at the mixture of sources mentioned above in the context of the threefold distinction between *fabula*, *historia*, and *narratio*, some—such as the Annals—might be termed “factual,” others—such as the *persona* of Suibhne Geilt—“fictional.” Thus, we have a narrative canvas on which are found various hues of truth and half-truth, as well as shades of reality and unreality, all underpinned by an inconsistency disliked by the modern mind. Looking to *Buile Shuibhne*, although the modern reader might identify it as a work of fiction, that would be to forget that fundamental to the author’s sense of reality and factuality is the premise that his text contains, within its own terms, nothing but the truth. The only narrative reality that matters, therefore, is that which exists in the mind of the author and in the perception of his audience. The author’s “skillful weaving of fact and fiction,” as I termed it above, is therefore fundamental to the creation of all medieval narrative and should give no reason to wonder. However, this should not negate our interest in the methods employed by the author in the creation of his fictional reality and in the techniques he uses to offset (what we today would term) “fictionality,” by giving to the text a narrative realism.

18 *The Annals of Ulster to A.D. 1131*, ed. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), *sub anno* 637. The translation is the unpublished one by Mac Niocaill, now available at www.ucc.ie/celt (last accessed on March 25, 2014).

19 *The Annals of Inisfallen* (MS. Rawlinson B503), ed. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), *sub anno* 639.

The Literary Transmission of *Buile Shuibhne*

Before looking in more detail at the question of fictionality in *Buile Shuibhne*, we ought to spend some time with the question of its transmission. Conventionally, the number of manuscripts in which *Buile Shuibhne* survives is given as three but, as we shall see below, the third and oldest manuscript is, strictly speaking, not a copy of the text at all. Despite Marstrander's²⁰ suspicion to the contrary, neither of the three paper manuscripts was copied from the other and all of them date from the post classical period, specifically from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, so that we must contend with a substantial gap between the putative time of composition of the text and its oldest manuscript witnesses. These are: Royal Irish Academy B iv 1, pp. 82a–95b, copied at various times between 1671–5²¹ by Dáibhidh Ó Duibhgeannáin²² (MS B); Royal Irish Academy 23 K 44, pp. 131–180, copied by Tomhaltach Mac Muirghiosa between 1721–2 (MS K); and Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels 3410, fol. 59a–61b, copied by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in 1629 (MS L).²³ Standing in contrast to the heightened status and interest *Buile Shuibhne* enjoys today, this paucity of manuscript witnesses (as well as the non-inclusion of the text in any of the great manuscript books²⁴ produced during the Early Modern period) begs the question whether this reflects a low level of popularity in the pre-modern era. Before looking at the fate of *Buile Shuibhne* in the period after its composition, we may digress briefly to examine the evidence of two texts

20 Carl Marstrander, *Fleadh Dúin na nGéadh agus Cath Muighe Rath*, note on line 397, p. 17: “In [MSS] BK one line has been dropped (what seems to prove that BK are copies of one and the same MS)].”

21 A note on fol. 247r records the death of Ruaidhrí Ó hEadhra on the 12th of December 1675: “Ruaidhri ó headhra .II. bháis 12 lá december 1675 7 bennacht for a anmain.”

22 Ruth Lehmann (*Fled Dúin na nGéd*, p. xi) states that the “opening page [of *Fled Dúin na nGéd*] and one later page, however, were written by Seumas Mac Con Midhe.” I would like to thank Mr. Colm Ó Cuaig, M.A., of the Department of Irish, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, National University of Ireland, Galway, for his assistance in establishing that this indeed is the case, and in identifying the “one later page” as pg. 57a.

23 For full details of the manuscripts, see O’Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2); James H. Delargy & Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* 13 fasciculi, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1930), V, 586–593; Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* 13 fasciculi, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1928), fasciculus II, 165–66; Joseph van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royal de Belgique, Tome Cinquième (Histoire—Hagiographie)* (Brussels: Henri Lamertin, 1905), 384–89.

24 See Timothy O’Neill, *The Irish Hand* (Mountrath: The Dolmen Press, 1984) for details of some of these manuscript books such as *Leabhar Buidhe Leacáin*, *Leabhar Ua Maine*, or *Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta*.

composed in the period 1150–1225, prior to the composition of *Buile Shuibhne* or perhaps coinciding with it. The poem beginning *Ros mBruic is conair chúan*, which contains allusions to Suibhne, is found in a number of sources. Firstly, it appears (as 17 quatrains) in the text known as *Bórama*²⁵, in *Lebor na Núachong-bála*, the great manuscript compendium of the second half of the twelfth century. Two lines refer obliquely to Suibhne: “doraga fer foluamnach / atúaid a mMaig Rath,”²⁶ i.e., “From Magh Rath in the north shall come a fluttering one,” where *fer foluamnach* is glossed “.i. Suibne.” While it is difficult to date the gloss with absolute certainty, the non-lenition of *-b-* suggests a date anterior to 1200, before lenition of *b*, *d*, *g*, and *m* becomes the dominant practice, while the letterforms strongly suggest that the same hand penned both the main text and the gloss.

Ros mBruic is conair chúan is also found (as 8 quatrains) in the early-thirteenth century *Agallamh na Seanórach*.²⁷ That the author of this section of the *Agallamh* (ll. 2626–90) had knowledge of the *tradition* of Suibhne’s murder and burial at Teach Mo Ling (alias Ros mBrocc in the *Agallamh*) is clear from these lines, which form some of the introductory prose to the poem: “[. . .] Suibne Geilt tic assin chath sin is annsa baili seo muir[b]fithé hé 7 aidhlécthar,”²⁸ i.e., “[. . .] and Suibhne Geilt comes from that battle [of Magh Rath]. It is in this place that he will be killed and buried.” From § 74 of *Buile Shuibhne* onwards are also described Suibhne’s murder and burial but as there is no direct textual equivalence or verbal correspondence between both accounts, it does not follow *a posteriori*, nor can it be demonstrated, that the *Agallamh* drew on our text, nor indeed that our text had to be in existence by the time the *Agallamh* was composed. The poem was reworked in the fifteenth century by the redactor of the *Agallamh Bheag*²⁹ or of its source, which I will discuss below.

Another reference that predates *Buile Shuibhne* is to be found in the Life of Mo Ling³⁰ dateable to perhaps the middle of the twelfth century.³¹ Here we find

²⁵ A *terminus post quem* of 1186 for its present *état* might be suggested by the reference in line 39315 to the body of St. Patrick being in Dún [Pátraicc], an event that occurred in 1186.

²⁶ Richard Irvine Best & Michael A. O’Brien, *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Leabar na Núachong-bála*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies: 1967), ll. 38118–19.

²⁷ Whitley Stokes & Ernst Windisch, *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, vol. 4:1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), ll. 2672–87.

²⁸ Whitley Stokes & Ernst Windisch, *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, vol. 4:1, (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), ll. 2668–69.

²⁹ Ed. Neasa Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh na Seanórach I–III* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1942), vol. 2, 90–92.

³⁰ Whitley Stokes, *The Birth and Life of St. Moling* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1907).

³¹ Written perhaps around 1150, though it may be the author’s deliberate use of a certain style that is responsible for this impression.

a reference to the cowherd killing Suibhne: “Ro marb buachail na mbo in gheilt .i. Suibne máic Colman,”³² but again this merely shows knowledge of the legend but not necessarily of the text of *Buile Shuibhne*, which, as I contend, had yet to be composed.

What of the evidence for knowledge of *Buile Shuibhne* during the centuries after its composition? Given the centrality of the poetic *persona* in the text, it is surprising that, apart from one solitary example, Suibhne is nowhere referenced in the vast corpus of Bardic poetry composed in Ireland and Scotland in the period 1200–1650. That void, already noted by Carney,³³ suggests that neither the text nor its hero enjoyed any great popularity among the professional³⁴ poetic classes of the pre-modern period.³⁵

The sole example³⁶ so far identified from the classical canon occurs in a *deibhidhe* poem beginning *Dá urradh i n-iath Éireann*,³⁷ ascribed to Giolla Chríod Brúilingeach, which has been preserved in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*. While I can find no dates for the poet, the obit of his patron, who can be identified as Tomhaltach an Oinigh mac Diarmada († 1458 according to the *Annals of Connacht*),³⁸ allows us to date the composition to the fifteenth century. The poet refers to his patron’s foe as “Fear mar Shuibhne nach beir buadh . . . is daoí meathtach míolamhach,” i.e., “One in the manner of Suibhne—not victorious . .

32 Whitley Stokes, *The Birth and Life of St. Moling* (see note 30), § 75.

33 James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955), 160.

34 I say “professional poetic classes” as I think it important to distinguish between the producers of canonical (i.e., official poetry, written in Classical Modern Irish) and non-canonical literature (less formalized, and written in a lower register) during the period after 1200.

35 This is in contrast to the many characters, both poetic or otherwise, referenced as apologues, such as Aithirne, Dallán, Fionn, Oisín, Seanchán etc for which see L. P. Ó Caithnia, *Apalóga na bhFíli 1200–1650* (Dublin: An Clóchomhar, 1984). Furthermore, in the tract *De Scriptoribus Hibernicis* (ed. James Carney, “De Scriptoribus Hibernicis,” *Celtica* 1 [1946]: 86–110) compiled in 1656 by An Dubhaltach mac Fir Bhisigh in which he sets down the various writers of Ireland since earliest times, although he lists many of the aforementioned mythical / semi-historical poets nowhere does he include Suibhne.

36 Knowledge of this example I owe to Dr. Bryan Frykenberg. I do not count here the poem *Mairg atá sa mbeathaidh-sí* (discussed below) as it is in the looser *Óglachas* (rather than in the strict *Dán Díreach*) form.

37 Normalized by the editor from the manuscript reading *Da vrre in nea errin*, in: W. J. Watson, *Bardachd Albanach: Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1978), 46.

38 A. M. Freeman, *Annála Connacht. The Annals of Connacht* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies).

and a failed, bungling poltroon.”³⁹ The occurrence of the poem in a Scottish manuscript points to the presence in that part of the pan-Gaelic world of shards of the Suibhne tradition, specifically that of Suibhne’s failure as a military leader.

Looking to the parallel non-Bardic tradition, we do not find any compositions being fathered on Suibhne, a somewhat surprising fact given his reputation⁴⁰ as a maker of poems. Leaving aside those poems ascribed to him in *Buile Shuibhne*, all other poetic compositions attributed to Suibhne date from the Old- or Middle-Irish periods. These are the three quatrains on *Túaim Inbir* in the *Codex Sancti Pauli*;⁴¹ five of the Mo Ling poems (86 quatrains in total) from the Brussels MS 5100–5104⁴²; a single quatrain *Menic m’ong / cian om relic mo thech toll*⁴³ but probably a false ascription; and the six quatrains beginning *Fuarus inber soirchi sunt*, from Trinity College Dublin MS H.3.18, printed by Kuno Meyer.⁴⁴

Mention was made above of the reworking of the poem beginning *Ros mBroc inniu is conair chúan*, in the fifteenth-century *Agallamh Bheag*,⁴⁵ as part of the recasting of the earlier *Agallamh na Seanórach*.⁴⁶ The *Agallamh Bheag* version is a much reduced⁴⁷ blend of what are two separate poems from the *Bórama* text found in *Lebor na Núachongbála* i.e., *Ros mBrocc indiu is conair chúan*⁴⁸ and *Ros*

39 Watson *Bardachd Albanach: Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, ll. 525, 528. My translation differs from Watson’s who has “The one is as Suibhne, who wins no triumph [. . .] a shrinking handless poltroon.” My rendering of *meathtach* as “failed” is based on the examples given in DIL M119.8–16.

40 See below the discussion of the Middle-Irish commentary to *Bretha Étgid* in which reference is made to his poetic prodigiousness.

41 John Strachan & Whitley Stokes, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: A Collection of Old-Irish Glosses, Scholia Prose and Verse*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901–1903), 294.

42 Osborn Bergin, Richard Irvine Best, Kuno Meyer, and James George O’Keeffe, *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, vol. II, (Halle a. d. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1908).

43 Whitley Stokes, “The Bodleian Amra Choluimb Chille,” *Revue Celtique* 20 (1899): 31–55, 132–83, 248–89, 400–37; here 412, § 137.

44 Kuno Meyer, “A Poem Ascribed to Suibne Geilt,” *Ériu* 2 (1905): 95. I wish to thank Dr. Gisbert Hemprich of the University of Bonn for making available to me his forthcoming *Catalogue of Medieval Irish Texts: Part I: Prose; Part II: Verse* (Berlin: Curach Bhán).

45 Neasa Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh na Seanórach I–III* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1942).

46 Whitley Stokes & Ernst Windisch, *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, vol. 4:1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900).

47 The 111 lines of verse that make up the two poems in the *Lebor na Núachongbála* copy are reduced to 48 in the *Agallamh Bheag*.

48 Richard Irvine Best & Michael A. O’Brien, *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), ll. 38003–70.

mBruicc bale buredach that flank the short episode called *Fís Énán*⁴⁹ and that reflect two independent traditions, as suggested by the variation in the name Ros mBroc / Ros mBruic. Quatrain six of this version contains the couplet “Do icfa an fear foluaimneach / dō budh⁵⁰ ainm Suibhne an sao[i]r-fhear,”⁵¹ i.e., “The levitating one shall come / his name shall be Suibhne the noble,” where the second line is new, having replaced *atúaidh a Muigh Rath* (or the like) in the earlier *Agallamh na Seanórach*. This suggests a re-engagement with the texts of the Ros mBroc poems, in the fifteenth century, but does not constitute evidence for knowledge of *Buile Shuibhne* itself.

Again in the fifteenth-century, we find in *Cath Fionntrágha* a retrospectively created etiological anecdote concerning a certain Bolcán, king of the Franks, who loses his reason and seeks refuge in a valley known [as a consequence] as *Gleann Bolcáin*:⁵²

Ocus do-connairec rí Frangc chuigi hé & do-chuaidh a chruth & a chaemhdénamh de & téid a ghal & a ghaisceadh ar chúl & smuainis nach roibhi ar talmain dídin aigi muna deachadh a n-aer nó a firmaiminnt, & féchais suas arna néllaibh & smuainis gumadh dín dó eaturra & táinic édruma chélli & aigeanta dó & tuc síneadh ara cholainn ó talmain co ndeachaidh re gaíth & re gealtacht a fhiadhnaisi sluagh an domhain & nír thoirn don baetheitill sin co ráinic Gleann mBolcáin a n-oirthear na críchi sin, & tucadh gáirthe adhbulmhóra ag slugaibh an domhain 'gá chainedh & ac fianabhbh Érenn 'gá commaidheamh.”⁵³

[When the king of the Franks saw him approaching, his shape and beauty left him, his valor and bravery abated, and he realized there was no refuge on earth for him unless he took to the air or the sky. He looked up at the clouds and thought he might find safety between them. He was struck by lightness of sense and mind. He launched himself off the ground and was carried away as a *geilt* on the wind in the presence of the armies of the world, and did not rest from that foolish flight until he reached Gleann Bolcáin in the east of that region. And [his going] was greatly lamented by the armies of the world but celebrated by the soldiers of Ireland.⁵⁴

The reference to Gleann Bolcáin, as well as the nature of the incident, points to the author's familiarity with the story of Suibhne but hardly proves that he had a

⁴⁹ Richard Irvine Best & Michael A. O'Brien, *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Lebar na Núachong-bála*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), l. 38077.

⁵⁰ MS: b~.

⁵¹ Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh na Seanórach* (see note 45), 91, ll. 1–2.

⁵² Gearóid S. Mac Eoin, “Gleann Bolcáin agus Gleann na nGealt,” *Béaloideas* 30 (1962): 105–20, discusses the name.

⁵³ Cecile O'Rahilly, *Cath Finntrágha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1962), ll. 445–56.

⁵⁴ My own translation.

copy of *Buile Shuibhne* before him. Evidence of a more secure kind for the use of *Buile Shuibhne* is contained in *Beatha Colaim Chille* (i.e., The Life of Colum Cille), a text produced outside the circle of the professional inward-orientated *literati* as is implicit from references in its prologue.⁵⁵ It was commissioned by Maghnus Ó Domhnaill in the 1530s, ostensibly as the vernacular *vita* of one of the three *prími* of Ireland and patron saint of the Uí Dhomhnaill, Colum Cille (†597), but arguably as an exercise in the creation of a literary heirloom with which to augment the cultural and historical apparatus of the expanding Uí Dhomhnaill political dynasty.

The compiler refers to Suibhne's loss of reason, suggesting his familiarity with the traditions concerning that part of the Suibhne story. The inclusion of a textually undamaged quatrain, corresponding to § 16.5 in O'Keefe's edition, strongly suggests that a manuscript of *Buile Shuibhne* was to hand. A stronger indication of familiarity with the text of *Buile Shuibhne* on the part of the compiler, or perhaps the collaborator (who would have contributed this episode to the overall Life), is that portion of text by which the quatrain is preceded. It reads:

Acus do bris Domhnall mac Aeda mic Ainmirech, airdri Erend, cath Muighe Ratha forra, du in ar marbadh Congall 7 inar cuireadh derg-ár Uladh 7 allmharach, 7 a n-a ndeachaidh Suibne ar geltacht, amail adubairt C.C. Is lor do derbhadh an sceoil-se mar adubairt Domnall mac Aeda mic Ainmirech re Suibhne an uair do condaic se a n-airde a mbile Cille Riadhain a tír Conaill é a haithli an catha, gur truagh les a bheith amlaidh sin, 7 corub olc do chuaidh dó gan comairli C.C. do gabáil . . .⁵⁶

[Domhnall son of Áedh mac Ainmhireach, the high-king of Ireland, defeated them in the battle of Magh Rath, where Congall was killed and where the Ulaidh and the foreigners were bloodily slaughtered and where Suibhne lost his reason as Colum Cille had foretold. If proof of this matter were needed, see how Domhnall son of Áedh mac Ainmhireach said to Suibhne, (on seeing him atop the sacred tree of Cill Riagháin in Tír Chonaill in the wake of the battle), that he regretted seeing him thus, and that Suibhne's rejection of Colum Cille's advice had not turned out well for him (i.e., Suibhne).]⁵⁷

Specifically, the reference to the presence of Suibhne in the sacred tree of Cill Riagháin, as well as the strong verbal echo between *Buile Shuibhne*'s "Truag lem . . . iarsma muintire Congail amlaid sin" (§ 15) and "gur truagh les a bheith amlaidh sin" strongly suggest the presence of a manuscript of *Buile Shuibhne* in the workshop in which *Beatha Coluim Chille* was created. That only one quatrain (from the thirteen

55 Andrew O'Kelleher and Gertrude Schoepperle, *Betha Coluimb Chille* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1918), § 21.

56 Andrew O'Kelleher and Gertrude Schoepperle, *Betha Coluimb Chille* (see note 55), § 354.

57 My translation differs in a few points from that of O'Kelleher & Schoepperle (see note 56).

that might have been available) was used as a *dearbhadh* (i.e., *approbatio*) of the preceding assertion is in keeping with the convention of the compiler of the Life.

In another detail that suggests a knowledge of the text of *Buile Shuibhne*,⁵⁸ specifically of the words “et robadh maith dono comairle Choluim Chille don ghille úd fe[i]n da ndeachaidh le Congal do chuingidh sochraidhe co righ Alban im aghaidh-si” in § 15, the compiler has Suibhne go to Scotland (as *per Cath Muighe Rath*), where he is warned by Colum Cille not to partake in the battle of Magh Rath. However, the compiler of *Beatha Colaim Chille* either fabricates a new detail or draws on an alternative tradition by tracing the insanity of Suibhne not to the curse of Rónán (as *per Buile Shuibhne*) but to his failure to heed the advice of Colum Cille not to allow *allmhuraigh* (i.e., “foreigners”) into Ireland.⁵⁹

Moving to the seventeenth century, the historian and great prose stylist Séathrún Céitinn (†1546), in his monumental history of Ireland, briefly treats of the battle of Magh Rath, citing as his source *an stair-se da ngairthear Cath Maighe Rath*, i.e., “the tract called the Battle of Magh Rath.”⁶⁰ Nowhere, however, in his history does he mention Suibhne or the traditions pertaining to him, which is rather odd in light of Céitinn’s frequent digressions into the weird and wonderful.

That the tract he cited may very well be the narrative tale later edited by O’Donovan is suggested by the inclusion of a quatrain from that text⁶¹ as well as the mention of the first line from which it was excerpted:

. . . agus nochtais an seancha sin dó, amháil léaghthar san laoidh darab tosach: Tréan tiaghaid catha Conghail, mar a bhfuil an rann-so ar shuaitheantas ríogh Uladh féin: Leomhan buidhe i sróil uaine / Comhartha na Craobhruidhe / Mar do bhí ag Conchubhar cháidh / Atá ag Conghal ar congháil.

[. . . and the seancha told him what they were, as we read in the poem which begins: Mightily advance the battalions of Conghal, in which is the stanza on the king of Ulster’s own emblem: A yellow lion upon green satin / The emblem of the Craobh Ruadh / Such as was held by noble Conchubhar / Conghal now holds.⁶²

⁵⁸ Perhaps also of *Cath Muighe Rath*.

⁵⁹ This suspension of “historicity” by subverting earlier traditions in the cause of magnifying the subject of the Life is not unusual: see Feargal Ó Béarra, “*Ars Memorativa .i. Ealadha na Cuimhne: Eiseamláir as Beatha Coluim Chille*,” *Lochlann: Festschrift til Jan Erik Rekdal på 60-årsdagen. Aistí in Ómós do Jan Erik Rekdal ar a 60ú Lá Breithe* ed. L. I. Widerøe & C. Hambro (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2013), 178–87, for a discussion of another example.

⁶⁰ Patrick S. Dinneen, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn. The History of Ireland* (London: Irish Texts Society, 1908), 124–25, l. 1964.

⁶¹ John O’Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na n-Gedh, and The Battle of Magh Rath* (see note 16), 226, 230.

⁶² Patrick S. Dinneen, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (see note 60), 124–125, ll. 1981–87.

The seventeenth century, often seen as a period that heralds the close of a particular period in Irish literary activity, is also one that heralds the dawn of a new era in which the earlier aristocratic literature yields to that of the “lower” classes. In moving on to consider a number of post-seventeenth century items, I am aware of fundamental issues regarding the legitimacy of such a methodology, by which we compare pre- and post-seventeenth century tradition(s). Nevertheless, the items may be presented without necessarily drawing any binding conclusions from them.

Commenting on Gearóid Mac Eoin’s investigation⁶³ of the place names *Gleann Bolcáin* and *Gleann na nGealt* from the Suibhne legend, Brian Ó Cuív noted that this material “serve[d] to remind us that traditions of Suibhne Geilt may have been fairly widespread in medieval Ireland.”⁶⁴ Mac Eoin argued for a continuity of tradition between the eleventh-century Mo Ling poems⁶⁵ and twentieth-century oral tradition, and indeed some of the modern-day items he cited show great similarity to features of the medieval Suibhne tradition so that one might indeed posit a limited degree of continuity between medieval and modern traditions of Suibhne and of the *geilt* in general. Ó Cuív then went on to print two poetic compositions from later post classical tradition that treat of the story of Suibhne, as well as a reference to an allusion to *Gleann na nGealt* from the Irish Grammatical Tracts.⁶⁶

The first item was a ten-quatrain poem from an eighteenth-century manuscript, the scribe of which, according to Ó Cuív, may well have read a copy of *Buile Shuibhne*, while the second was a poem, from a manuscript written in 1712, in which “the poet imagines himself as Suibhne, deranged and concealing himself for a time (ll. 1–2), starting up at the belling of the stag in the wood, the roar of the waves and other sounds (3–4), and flying madly from place to place (9 ff.).”⁶⁷ A third item of evidence pertaining to the Suibhne tradition, published a number of years earlier by Cecile O’Rahilly, is the syllabic poem beginning *Mairg atá sa mbeathaidh-si*, written in the style of the *Dánta Grádha* (i.e., *Amour Courtois*), in which occurs the following allusion to Suibhne: “Teichid mo lucht aoinleaptha / uaim iar sgaradh rem chuimhne; tiaghaid róm re baoithghealtacht / go mbeirdis

⁶³ See Gearóid S. Mac Eoin, “Gleann Bolcáin agus Gleann na nGealt,” *Béaloideas* 30 (1962): 105–120.

⁶⁴ Brian Ó Cuív, “Miscellanea,” *Éigse* 11 (1966), 287–95; here 290.

⁶⁵ Osborn Bergin, Richard Irvine Best, Kuno Meyer and James O’Keeffe, *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* (see note 42), II.

⁶⁶ I.e., Irish Grammatical Tracts ii, example 1496, for which see Osborn Bergin, “Irish Grammatical Tracts” (Continued), *Ériu* 10 (1926–1928): 125–66.

⁶⁷ Brian Ó Cuív, “Miscellanea,” *Éigse* 11 (1966), 287–95; here 293.

barr air Shuibhne”⁶⁸ (i.e., “My lovers flee from me once they have forgotten”⁶⁹ me; they take off in foolish madness that would surpass [even] Suibhne.”

The occurrence of such a rare word as *baioithghealtacht* (unrecorded by DIL) in a poem in *Buile Shuibhne* (§ 43.6c) strongly suggests that the poet of *Mairg atá sa mbeathaidh-si* may well have been familiar with that poem, if not indeed with the whole of *Buile Shuibhne*. A fourth item from before 1700 that may be included here is the reference⁷⁰ to Suibhne, i.e., “Im Shuibhne luath ar buaireamh céille atáim” (i.e., “Like a nimble Suibhne, troubled in mind, am I”) in a poem⁷¹ by Pádraigín Haicéad (†1654).⁷²

Overall, the relatively small number of references suggests that *Buile Shuibhne* was but a peripheral feature of the non-canonical literary tradition of the post 1200 period. Looking at these scattered references to the tale, in the case of *Beatha Colaim Chille* we are dealing with a text produced outside the circle of the professional poets. As for the other three items mentioned above, these reflect the appearance of the literature of the descendancy—so long missing from the literary landscape—in the wake of the demise, in the seventeenth-century, of the traditional aristocracy-led (and aristocracy-orientated) literary tradition. The modest increase in references during the post classical period may reflect the eventual admission into the literary canon of a *persona* who did not belong to the official poetic canon of literary Ireland and Scotland during the pre-1650 period. As for the parallel oral literary stream, the evidence is very sparse but it

68 Cecile O’Rahilly, “*Mairg atá sa mbeathaidh-si*,” *Éigse* 12.4 (1968): 271–72; here 272.

69 The phrase *iar sgaradh rem chuimhne* might also be rendered “when I lose my reason.”

70 Mentioned by Pádraig Ó Riain, “The Materials and Provenance of ‘Buile Shuibhne’,” *Éigse* 15 (1974): 173–88; here 174, n. 8.

71 See Máire Ní Cheallacháin, *Filíocht Phádraigín Haicéad* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar, 1962), 48.5.

72 Many more allusions will be found in the period after 1700 like the following one from a composition by Toirdhealbhach Ó Cearrbhalláin (†1738): “Níl aon dá bhfeiceann an tsaol-bhean mhaiseach / nach n-éirigheann mar na geilte i mbárr na gcraobh” (Tomás Ó Máille, *Amhráin Chearrbhalláin. The Poems of Carolan together with other N. Connacht and S. Ulster Lyrics* (London: The Irish Texts Society, 1916), 110 ll. 25–26, i.e., “All that spy that comely cultured lady fly like madmen to the tree-tops,” or the phrase *dul/imeacht le craobhacha* i.e., “to go wild, mad” (Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* [Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1977], *sv craobh*, still current in Irish. One must also consider passages in later texts such as the one found in Seán Ó Neachtain’s eighteenth-century farce *Stair Éamuinn Uí Chléire* (see *Stair Éamuinn Uí Chléire*, ed. Eoghan Ó Neachtain [Baile Átha Cliath: M. H. Mac an Ghuill & a mhac, Teo, 1918], 34–37, ll. 1264–1358). The passage in question, while displaying no verbal correspondence with *Buile Shuibhne*, certainly shows strong echoes of that text and of its narrative in what amounts to a parodying of the *persona* of Suibhne.

suggests that *Suibhne* had but a peripheral place in that corpus of material. This corpus only starts to appear on the radar (i.e., in written form) from the seventeenth century onwards, as a direct consequence of the downfall of the hereditary literary infrastructure of Ireland and Scotland, caused, in part, by the relentless campaign of ethnic and cultural cleansing engaged in by the English in Ireland in the preceding century.

The Manuscript Transmission of *Buile Shuibhne*

Returning to the manuscript transmission of *Buile Shuibhne*, despite there being only three surviving manuscript witnesses associated with the text, we may, nevertheless, infer that there were more: as neither of the three extant manuscripts was copied from the other, this presumes at least three exemplars. Here should be mentioned an inventory of the manuscripts held at St Anthony's, the Irish Franciscan College in Louvain. Several draft copies are preserved in University College Dublin MS A34⁷³ in which is listed (under the heading *Index Librorum Hibernicorum in Papiro*) a *liber in quarto* containing the texts *Beatha Ronáin 7 buile suibne* [sic], interspersed among a number of non-hagiographic texts such as *Cath Muighe Mucraimhe*, *Nuallghubha Oilealla Óloim*, and *Cath Ruis na Ríogh ós Bóinn*. As this Louvain manuscript contained secular texts, it can hardly be the same as manuscript L (Brussels 3410, containing exclusively hagiographical materials) so that we must presume that it has perished. This lost manuscript, when added to the vellum original of *Buile Shuibhne* (also lost), to the node manuscript that explains the lack of interdependence between B, K, and L, and to their three respective exemplars, suggest that we must reckon with there having been a total of at least nine manuscripts of *Buile Shuibhne* since its composition.

The scribe of L, the third manuscript associated with *Buile Shuibhne*, was the Franciscan hagiographer Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (†1643). Although generally understood as being a copy of *Buile Shuibhne*, that is not what Ó Cléirigh's text is but rather a transcript of information relevant to the life of Saint Rónán Fionn mac Bearaigh taken from another, longer source. It was made for hagiographic purposes and not for the intrinsic value of *Buile Shuibhne* as a piece of literature, and also certainly not because of its being the main repository of the poetry ascribed to *Suibhne Geilt*. We have, therefore, really only two surviving manuscripts of *Buile Shuibhne*.

73 Myles Dillon, Canice Mooney and Pádraig de Brún, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Franciscan Library Killiney* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1969), 74.

Ó Cléirigh refers in his transcript⁷⁴ to the source from which he extracted the information pertaining to Saint Rónán as *Echtra Shuibhne*: the subscription reads “De S(ancto) Ronano mac Beruigh as Echtra Shuibhne,”⁷⁵ i.e., “[An extract] from *Eachtra Shuibhne* concerning Saint Rónán son of Bearach.” Ó Cléirigh’s text, at just over 2,000 words, equates to just over 11% of the version of *Buile Shuibhne* preserved in the other two manuscripts, and shows that his interest was not in Suibhne and his poems, in the narrative, nor in the textual integrity of *Buile Shuibhne* itself.

This last point is manifest in the dropping by Ó Cléirigh of the introductory material that forms § 1 of O’Keefe’s edition (based on the text in B and K). Indeed, the differences between Ó Cléirigh’s text and those of the other two manuscripts show that he truncated nine tenth of the long string of incidents and episodes (which constitute the bulk of the narrative in the other two manuscripts).⁷⁶ Furthermore, he redacted and re-organized the source copy as he worked and made editorial decisions and textual intrusions on the fly, so to speak, as a comparison of manuscripts B and K on the one hand with manuscript L will show. Incidentally, Ó Cléirigh also introduced a small number of comments into the text, and added a small number of glosses to some of the more uncommon words in the text, some of which crop up again in his *Sanasán Nua*⁷⁷ some sixteen years later, presumably extracted from texts such as this.

His decision to drop all but three of the 379 quatrains contained in the text (as printed by O’Keefe) tells us much about his opinion of *Buile Shuibhne* as literature but perhaps also of the instructions he received from his superiors.⁷⁸ As all three quatrains extracted by Ó Cléirigh (plus a fourth abbreviated by him to its first line) are not uttered by Suibhne, but by ecclesiastics, we might conjecture that the secularity of Suibhne’s poetry may not have appealed to Ó Cléirigh *for the purpose of the task at hand*. Perhaps, in a fashion similar to that of one

74 Printed by O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 174–78.

75 O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 174.

76 §§ 12–62 inclusive, as noted by O’Keefe (*Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 14, n.), have been truncated by Ó Cléirigh.

77 See Ó Cléirigh, Mícheál, *Foclóir nó Sanasan Nua* (Louvain, 1643); Miller, Arthur W. K., ed. and trans., “O’Clery’s Irish Glossary,” *Revue Celtique* 4 (1879–1880): 349–428, 479–480; 5 (1881–1883): 1–69.

78 We have it from Ó Cléirigh himself, in other manuscripts, that he received strict instructions from his superiors to copy his exemplar faithfully and to resist changing it. See Nollaig Ó Muirle, ed., Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, *His Associates and St Anthony’s College, Louvain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press), 48–49, 72–73. Perhaps in this case, he was instructed to ignore materials that were of no direct relevance to the lives of the saints, in particular to the life of Saint Rónán?

of the scribes of the twelfth-century *Lebor na Núachongbála*, the poetry of *Buile Shuibhne* was considered *figmenta poetica*,⁷⁹ a stance that would contrast, admittedly and rather puzzlingly, with his recording in another Brussels manuscript—Bibliothèque Royale 5100–4⁸⁰—of a series of secular poems ascribed to Suibhne (and Mo Ling). The matter merits further investigation.

Looking further at the Ó Cléirigh transcript, it presents us with a conundrum of sorts for it is clear that we have to do here with three separate titles, representing (in Ó Cléirigh's mind at least) three separate texts i.e., *Beatha Rónáin*, *Eachtra Shuibhne*, and *Buile Shuibhne*.⁸¹ It is manifest from the use of the title *Eachtra Shuibhne* in the subscription of Ó Cléirigh's transcript (to denote the immediate source of the information pertaining to Saint Rónán) that the latter two are not the same. The comment (in the body of Ó Cléirigh's transcript) “amhail dherbhas an leabhar sgríobhthar air fein darab ainm Buile Shuibhne,”⁸² i.e., “as attests the tale written about him called *Buile Shuibhne*,” suggests that *Buile Shuibhne* and *Eachtra Shuibhne* are not one and the same.⁸³ Furthermore, and notwithstanding the description of Ó Cléirigh's transcript by Van den Gheyn⁸⁴ as “Vie de S. Ronan [. . .] avec épisode de la vie de S. Molling,” the text of the Brussels manuscript, as preserved and as compared with the standard hagiographical model, can hardly be taken as constituting a life of the saint. In the margin of his transcript, on folio 60r, stands the comment “amhail innises a stair féin,” i.e., “as his own story relates,”) on the words “& fuair bas do rinn amail doshir Ronán ar Dhía,”

⁷⁹ Richard Irvine Best and Michael A. O'Brien, *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1956), I. 12418.

⁸⁰ Bergin et al., *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, vol. II (see note 42).

⁸¹ Specific to the last two titles, these seem to imply that we are dealing not only with two different narratives but also with two different narrative genres, one an *eachtra* (probably best rendered “wanderings,” perhaps “adventures”), the other a *buile* (best rendered “fury” as outlined above). Alternatively, it could be a case of the same text being referred to under two different names, as is the case with such texts as *Immram Brain*, *Echtrae Muirchertaig maic Erca*, *Fled Bricrenn* or *Echtrae Con Culainn*, i.e., materials from the same literary plot surfacing under different guises, for which see Feargal Ó Béarra, “The Otherworld Realm of Tír Scáith,” *Festgabe für Hildegard L. C. Tristram überreicht von Studenten, Kollegen und Freunden des ehemaligen Faches Keltologie der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg*, ed. Gisbert Hemprich (Berlin: Curach Bhán Publications, 2009), 81–100; here 90–91.

⁸² O'Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 176.

⁸³ However, we cannot be certain beyond all doubt that those words do not in fact refer to an exemplar, (i.e., a copy of *Buile Shuibhne*), despite stating in his subscription that the name of his exemplar was *Eachtra Shuibhne*, as Ó Cléirigh may have decided to make no distinction where none existed.

⁸⁴ Joseph van den Gheyn, J. *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royal de Belgique* (see note 23), vol. 5, 386.

i.e., “and he died by spear-point as Rónán had requested of God.” These latter words in turn are followed by the rubric “gonadh é sin adhbhar bhuile Suibhne tre easanoir an chlérigh,” i.e., “so that that is the cause of Suibhne’s madness due to his having dishonored the cleric.”⁸⁵

A comparison between the text of *Buile Shuibhne* and that of Ó Cléirigh’s transcript suggests that if he used a copy of *Buile Shuibhne* that he engaged in widespread editing as well as in lexical substitution, so though not impossible, it is unlikely that he was drawing from a version identical with that contained in manuscripts B or K. The passage describing the onset of Suibhne’s madness,⁸⁶ which precedes this statement in Ó Cléirigh’s transcript, does not derive unadulterated from the equivalent passage in *Buile Shuibhne* (§§ 11–12) nor from the equivalent passage describing Suibhne’s madness in *Cath Muighe Rath*⁸⁷ as this latter text is later in both language and style than *Buile Shuibhne*. In sum, Ó Cléirigh’s text shows that the copy of *Buile Shuibhne* from which he worked was neither identical with nor similar to that from which the scribes of K and B worked. This seems to indicate the existence of a now lost text—*Eachtra Shuibhne*—from which Ó Cléirigh drew for his description of the onset of Suibhne’s madness or else that Ó Cléirigh displayed an uncharacteristic disregard for the correct name of his source by referring to it as *Eachtra Shuibhne* rather than *Buile Shuibhne*.

⁸⁵ For the text of this part of Ó Cléirigh’s transcript, see O’Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 174–78.

⁸⁶ “Cíodh trá acht ó rochomraicsiot na catha fochedóir robhúirset & rogairset na sluaigh da gach leith: ódchuala Suibhne na gáire mora sin & a bfreccartha & a bfuaim & a macalla a néllai-bh nimhe & a bfoirghthibh na firminnte rofech súas & rolíon némhain & dásacht & fáindeal & fualang & foluamhain é & miosgais gach ionaidh a mbíodh & serc gach ionaidh nogo roichedh. Romheirbhligsett a mheóir & rochrithnaigset a chosa, roluathadh a chridhe, rocloachlá a chéd-fadha, rosáobadh a radharc, rothuitset a airm as a lamhaibh go ndeachaidh la breithir Rónain ar gealtacht amhail gach n-eathaid & gach n-én bfoluaimhneach & antan ráinic as in cath amach ba hainminic notaidhledh a chosa an talamh as conntabairt go mbenfadh a dhrucht don fhéar ar a ettroma & ar a aierdacht an cheime rocingedh & nir fhan don reim roretha sin gu nar fhagaibh magh no machaire nó coill nó moin no mothar i nEirinn gan taisteal an lá sin & rochaith a aois & a aimsir ar gealtacht i nEirinn & a mBretain an ccein romair, gan furtacht gan fóiridhin gan taobh do tabairt le dáoinibh amhail dherbhas an leabhar sgriobhtar air fein darab ainm *Buile Shuibhne*” [emphasis mine]. (O’Keeffe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)* (see note 2), 176).

⁸⁷ John O’Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na n-Gedh, and The Battle of Magh Rath* (see note 16), 230–34.

Panfictionality

It hardly needs to be pointed out that the text of *Buile Shuibhne*, composed at a remove of at least five hundred years from the seventh-century events it purports to describe, tells us nothing about the battle of Magh Rath, much less about life in seventh-century Ireland. In creating a text of “strange originality and beauty of diction,”⁸⁸ the poet has produced a work of historical fiction, an exercise in “pan-fictionality”, to borrow the phrase coined by Ryan⁸⁹ when describing the literary merging of fiction and nonfiction. In *Buile Shuibhne*, we see the author’s attempt to reconfigure both the passage and continuity of literary and historical traditions by connecting the reality of the present with a fictionalized reality securely set in the past. The fictionality of the text is apparent from its exordial sentence, containing as it does the untruth (at best an unsubstantiated statement) that Suibhne was king of the kingdom of Dál nAraidhe. However, such fictionality, one might argue, is offset by the author’s furnishing of the four Boëthian⁹⁰ requirements (that implicitly provide factual information) regarding *persona* (§ 1: *Dála Shuibhne* . . .), *causa* (§ 1: *fochann 7 tucaitt* . . .), *tempus* (§ 3: *fecht ann* . . .), and *locus* (§ 3: *i nDál Araidhe .i. Ceall Luinni* . . .) *scribendi*.

Secondly, the author brings the actual and the authentic to the fore via the *persona* of the authorial voice by embedding the narrative in a type of intertextual veracity when he nosistically refers to *Cath Muighe Rath*, one of the other texts⁹¹ in the “Suibhne Trilogy,” with the words *roaisneidhsem remhainn* (§ 1) i.e., “we have previously related.”⁹² Although we cannot know whether these words

⁸⁸ Aodh de Blacam, *Gaelic Literature Surveyed* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1928), 55.

⁸⁹ Marie-Laure Ryan, “Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality,” *Narrative* 5.2 (1997): 165–87.

⁹⁰ See Robin Flower, “Quidam Scotigena .i. Discipulus Boëthii or Boëthius and the Four Conditions of a Tale,” *Ériu* 8 (1916): 150–54.

⁹¹ For background information to these texts see Carl Marstrander, “A New Version of the Battle of Mag Rath,” *Ériu* 5 (1911): 226–47.

⁹² This reading is found in both B and K, and as neither manuscript is copied from the other, we may wonder whether it constitutes a common reading from a lost node manuscript in which the sequencing of the three texts that make up the trilogy had already occurred. The fact that the language of *Cath Muighe Rath* (Marstrander’s MR II, “A New Version of the Battle of Mag Rath,” 227) predates *Buile Shuibhne* by perhaps two hundred years, that Suibhne is nowhere mentioned in it, and that there is no verbal correspondence between that recension of *Cath Muighe Rath* and *Buile Shuibhne*, suggests that *remhainn* refers not to that *text* but to the physical location of the younger Recension I of *Cath Muighe Rath* (Marstrander’s MR I) in the manuscript just before *Buile Shuibhne*. If it refers to the younger Recension I of *Cath Muighe Rath* (Marstrander’s MR I, edited by O’Donovan in 1842), then the lost ancestor node manuscript is no older than the thirteenth

are authorial or scribal, or whether they belong to the original text or were retrospectively introduced, nevertheless their function is the same: to create continuity with the past by linking the text to a pre-existing narrative, thus lending to it authenticity and veracity. Shortly thereafter, in § 13, we witness the authorial voice entering the text again with another such intertextual assertion: *amail adru[bru]mar 7 rohaisnéidhsem remhainn*, i.e., “as we stated and related already.” Further reinforcement of the artificially created textual reality is achieved by providing Suibhne with a fictional kinsman (*cliamhain*), namely *Aonghus Reamhar mac Ardghail mhic Mhacníadh mhic Ninneadha do thúathaibh Uá Ninneadha* of Dál nAraidhe (§ 13), backed up by a subsequent intertextual allusion: [. . .] *righ Ua bFaéláin romharbhus-[s]a i ccath Muighe Rath* (§ 39), i.e., “king of [the territory / people of] Uí Fhaéláin whom I killed in the battle of Magh Rath.”

The commonplace introductory genealogy so familiar from the “historical” narratives of medieval Irish does not form part of the text’s *exordium* (§ § 1–5) as the author has forgone it in an attempt to guarantee Suibhne anonymity. This is not the case with Rónán, who is provided with an inherited nine-generation pedigree reaching back to Loégaire mac Néill, the semi-historical fifth-century king of *Teamhair* (Tara). The lack of a genealogy for Suibhne is further accommodated into the narrative fabric when (in § 5) it is implicitly disclosed that, due to the curse of Rónán, no further kings would come of the race of Colmán Cúar (Suibhne’s father). Such a textual assertion would immediately diminish the relevance of such a genealogy in a text ostensibly written many generations after the supposed event. Thus, the actuality of the *tempus scribendi* becomes retrospectively imposed upon, textually relative to, and incorporated into the temporal reality of the text in an attempt to give the story an authenticity based on a “prophecy”, (made *post factum*), in § 5.

Further offsetting of fictionality is accomplished by having a purely fictitious narrative proposition play out on a landscape occupied, to a large though not exclusive extent, by real and determinable place names, thereby giving to the narrative a veneer of genuineness and factuality. Descriptions containing a toponymic, such as *Suibhne mh’ainm ó Ros Ercáin / as misi an gealtán gealtach* (§ 21.2c–d); *As me gealtán Ghlinne Bolcáin* (§ 21.4d); *Me Suibhne mac Colmáin chóir* (§ 73.4a); *Ochán, as meisi Suibhne* (§ 69.1a); *As me geilt Glinni Bolcáin* (§ 69.4a); *As*

century, the period during which that younger recension of *Cath Muighe Rath* was composed. My thirteenth-century dating for MR I is tentatively suggested on the evidence of the occurrence in the text of the Norman-French loanword *blocc* (O’Donovan, *The Battle of Dun na n-Gedh and the Battle of Magh Rath*, 248), as well as on the presence in the text of certain stylistic and syntactic patterns that would not accord with a dating of the text to before 1200.

misí Suibhne mac Colmáin / ó Bhúais bhil (§ 47.4a–b), or *A Shuibhne Ghleanna Bolcáin* (§ 83.8d) were in all probability not perceived by the audience as mere literary monikers but, rather, as designations which embedded the hero in a reality informed, determined, and ratified by the actuality of genuine and recognized toponymic elements. Thus, a truth element such as a verifiable place name serves to give credence to the events purported by the author to have taken place thereby guaranteeing the veracity of his tale in the minds of the audience. Of course, factuality (as shall be seen below in the case of the place name Cill Riagháin) can also be intentionally sacrificed in order to avoid the specificity of fact in favor of the generality of fiction.

The fictional hero is furnished with a narrative historicity by being brought into association not only with genuine toponyms and verifiable historical events (such as the battle of Magh Rath), but also with two historical personages of the early Church, Rónán⁹³ and Mo Ling, whose deaths are recorded in various annals *sub annis* 664 and 697 respectively. The linkage with Mo Ling is not the work of the author but draws on an independent tradition, a strand of which is represented by a series of twenty four poems of earlier date (eleventh century?), nineteen of which are uttered by Mo Ling, the rest by Suibhne. They are the so-called Mo Ling poems from the Brussels MS 5100-4, of which *Buile Shuibhne* preserves a very small number of verbal and textual echoes (as opposed to correspondences), but which lie beyond the scope of this contribution. The inclusion of Mo Ling, one might argue, in a tale that already featured another saint, may have been narratively avoidable as Rónán and Suibhne could have been somehow reconciled with one another by the creator of the text. Therefore, his presence in the text may reflect the author's unwillingness to suppress or ignore (for whatever reason) a persistent pre-existing tradition. Alternatively, it may simply indicate the dominance of either the saint's cult, or of the tradition associating Mo Ling with Suibhne, in the author's cultural, literary, or social sphere.

In sum, when we observe *Buile Shuibhne* in terms of the apposition between historicity and fictionality, we are confronted with an author creatively engaging

⁹³ Modern scholarship sometimes sees Rónán as an amalgam of several semi-historical, semi-fictional saints who share his name: see Pádraig Ó Riain, *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011); S. Ó Dufáigh, "Rónán of Aghalurcher," *Clogher Record* 19 (2007–08): 185–200; and D. Schlegel, "Eastern Ulster Origins in the Fermanagh Genealogies: O'Monaghan, the Manaig, and St Ronan: Magarraghan, Lisgoole, and St Aed," *Clogher Record* 20 (2010): 195–221; here 203. Pádraig Ó Riain ("The Materials and Provenance of 'Buile Shuibhne'," *Éigse* 15 [1974]: 173–88; here 178) explains: "Rónán Finn (son of Berach) of the literary tradition must then be viewed—precisely as his name suggests—as a conflation of two separate saints of the genealogical tradition, Rónán Finn, son of Sárán, and Rónán, son of Berach."

with his sources, with his own imagination, and as we shall presently see, with his own internal dialogue. The work of the author forces us to remember that “[T] ruth is an ultimate standard although it recognizes no ultimate standard by which truth is itself determined.”⁹⁴ By producing a bedrock of “fictions de vérité”⁹⁵ on which would rest the newly-forged narrative reality he created for Suibhne Geilt, the author’s smelting of the diverse elements that stemmed from his historical and creative imaginations show him to have been a highly skilled artisan, a textual artist who was a master of offsetting fictionality, and someone who could produce the most important element of all—a great yarn.

The Terminology of Mental Illness in *Buile Shuibhne*

A wide range of terminology is preserved in our sources (both legal and non-legal) to describe the mentally unsound even if the exact meaning of certain terms can be difficult to determine. Two terms in particular are of relevance to *Buile Shuibhne*, namely *baile* and *geilt*. The Old-Irish term *baile* (later *buile/boile*)⁹⁶ is rendered “vision; frenzy, madness (originally arising out of super-natural revelations)” by DIL, as “vision extatique; folie” by LÉIA,⁹⁷ and as “mantic utterance” by O’Rahilly, who distinguishes (albeit implicitly) between Modern Irish *buile* (rendered “madness”) and the older form of the word (*baile*) meaning “‘mantic utterance’ (as in *baile in Scáil*).”⁹⁸

One occurrence of the word, *tria metar ocus baile*,⁹⁹ which introduces a prophesy attributed to Saint Caillín, is glossed (probably by the scholar Tadhg Ó Rodaighe †1706) *Per met[r]um et furorem spiritualem*, while a second occurrence in the same source (*tria baile ocus faitsine*,¹⁰⁰ i.e., “through ecstasy and

⁹⁴ Edwyn Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament* (London: Faber & Faber, 1931), 27.

⁹⁵ Roger Dragonetti, *Le Mirage des Sources: L’Art du Faux dans le roman médiéval* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), 23.

⁹⁶ Both forms are attested, and have sanction in Classical Modern Irish: see Osborn Bergin, “Supplement: Irish Grammatical Tracts II,” *Ériu* 8 (1916): i–60; here 45.

⁹⁷ Joseph Vendryes, Edouard Bachellery, and Pierre-Yves Lambert, ed., *Lexique étymologique de l’irlandais ancien: Lettre B* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1981).

⁹⁸ Thomas F. O’Rahilly, “Notes, Mainly Etymological,” *Ériu* 13 (1942): 144–219; here 151.

⁹⁹ William M. Hennessy, *The Book of Fenagh in Irish and English: Originally Compiled by St. Caillin, Archbishop, Abbot, and Founder of Fenagh, Alias Dunbally of Moy-Rein, Tempore St. Patricii, with the Contractions Resolved, and, (as far as possible), the Original Text Restored* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1875), 290.

¹⁰⁰ William M. Hennessy, *The Book of Fenagh in Irish and English* (see note 99), 284.

prophesy”) again shows the connection between *baile* and poetic prophesy. This perceived association between *baile* and visions correlates well with the idea of the mad as conduits for supernatural visions of the Otherworld or of the Apocalypse, and is reminiscent of the *furor divinus*, the divinely inspired frenzy associated with prophets and poets. Such saintly prophetic visions, reflecting the visionary aspect of *baile* (a phenomenon “originally arising out of supernatural revelations” as DIL (*sv baile*) notes), are also referred to in some sources by the term *boile noémh*.¹⁰¹ Thus, we read in the *Annals of Connacht* (*sub anno* 1224) of Cathal Croibhdhearg Ua Conchobhuir: “Ri ro chaitetur tuatha & ecolsa, faind & mna acus deblena, somaine amail ro tingellad i llebraib & i mboilidaib noem & firen riam,” i.e., “the king whose wealth was partaken by laymen and clerics, infirm men, women and helpless folk, as had been prophesied in the writings and *the visions of saints* [emphasis mine] and righteous men of old.”¹⁰² We may note also the “laudatory term” *baile bard* meaning “subject or inspiration of poets” (DIL *sv baile*).

On the evidence of the examples contained in DIL, we may say that the use of *baile* as a qualifying noun (meaning “mad, frenzied”) or as the nominal element in a prepositional phrase (*for buile* / (*f*)*ri buile*), although already found in two of the late Middle-Irish (ca. 1100) *Passions and Homilies*¹⁰³ preserved in the fifteenth-century manuscript *An Leabhar Breac*, i.e., The “Speckled” Book, does not become established until the Early Modern Irish period.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, although *buile* is used in the title of our tale (as a subscription in manuscripts K and B, and as an internal comment in L), nowhere in the actual body of the text are *buile* or any of its derivatives (*baileadhach/buileadhach* “confused, deranged one”; *baili-ughadh* “becoming mad,” for example) employed to describe madness, the terms preferred by its author being *gealtacht* or *mire*, implying the observation, on the part of the author, of a distinction in meaning between *buile* and *gealtacht/mire*.

101 A later such occurrence is as the name of a poem *Buile Phádraig* (or *Tiomna Phádraig*) mentioned in a letter of 1634 contained in University College Dublin MS A30, p 2., see Myles Dillon, Canice Mooney, Pádraig de Brún, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Franciscan Library Killybegs* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1969), 63.

102 A. Martin Freeman, *Annála Connacht: the Annals of Connacht (A. D. 1224–1544)* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944), 4–5.

103 Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and Homilies from Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation, and Glossary* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1887), ll. 1851, 1298.

104 Examples cited by DIL include *mar mhnaoi bhuile*; *dhá tharbh buile*; *lucht buile nó baoith-chéille*; as prepositional phrase: *geilt ar buile mé*; *ro bui E. . . re buili*; and the two from Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and Homilies from Leabhar Breac: conid for boile atat* (l. 1851), and *for baile atái, a dhuine* (l. 1298).

A rationale for such a distinction might be supported by a tradition preserved as a stray remark, in a Middle-Irish commentary on an Old-Irish legal text, that represents Suibhne as a prodigious poet. *Bretha Étgid*, as the text is properly¹⁰⁵ known, was printed by Binchy¹⁰⁶ from two manuscripts, that of Trinity College Dublin MS E.3.5 reading:

Teora buada in catha-sin: maidm ar congal claen ina anfir re domnall ina firinne, suibne geilt do dul ar geltacht, 7 a incinn dermait do buain a cind cind faelad; 7 nocan ed-sin is buaid ann suibni do dul ar geltacht, acht ar facaib do scelaib 7 do laidib dia eis i neirind [. . .],”¹⁰⁷

[That battle (i.e., Magh Rath) had three positive outcomes: the defeat of Congal Claén in his falsehood by Domnall in his truthfulness, Suibne Geilt losing his reason, and Cenn Faélad having the part¹⁰⁸ of his brain which allowed him to forget knocked out; [but perhaps] it is not Suibne losing his reason but the multitude of tales and lays he left behind him in Ireland which is [really] the positive outcome (*búad*).]

Given the existence of this tradition that associates Suibhne’s madness with poetic prodigiousness, it might be argued that rather than “madness” (as is oft-times the case) a better rendering of the word *buile* (in the title of our tale at any rate) would be the Platonic *furor poeticus* or even *insania poetae*, terms (as noted by Wehrli), that become general from the twelfth century onwards in the Latin

105 Erroneously called *Lebor Aicle* or The Book of Aicill, a name not attested prior to the nineteenth century; see Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), 182.

106 Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (see note 96), 250.36–339.

107 Other versions of this statement are to be found in Trinity College Dublin MS H.3.18 (CIH 926.5–12), Royal Irish Academy MS D v 2 (ed. by Breatnach, *A Companion to Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, 378–464), in the Middle-Irish tract on the origin of the Irish language *Auraicept na nÉces* (George Calder, *Auraicept na n-Éces. The Scholars’ Primer* (Edinburgh: John Grant: 1917), ll. 72–78), and in *Fled Dúin na nGéd* (edited by Ruth Lehmann *Fled Dúin na nGéd* [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1964]) ll. 928–32. For the Old-Irish canonical section of the *Auraicept*, see Anders Ahlqvist, *The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces* (Helsingfors/Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica. 1983). It has also been incorporated into the late eleventh-century *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, for which see Carl Marstrander, *Fleadh Dúin na nGéadh ocus Cath Muighe Rath* (Christiania: I Kommission Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1910), ll. 768–71.

108 This is called *inchinn dermait* (lit. “brain of forgetfulness”), taken by Hildegard Tristram (Hildegard L. C. Tristram, “Warum Cenn Faelad sein ‘Gehirn des Vergessens’ verlor,” *Deutsche, Kelten und Iren*, ed. Hildegard L. C. Tristram (Hamburg: Buske, 1990), 207–48; here 248) as symbolizing “die Einführung der stabilen Wissensspeicherung,” i.e., the introduction of a stability in the preservation of knowledge [with the advent of a written culture in early Ireland].

West to describe the poetic gift.¹⁰⁹ An obvious and practical motivation for the author to observe such a distinction, by keeping the word *buile* strictly for the title of the tale, is to allow his newly-composed *Buile Shuibhne* to seamlessly segue into the pre-existing narrative tradition in general, and specifically into the pre-existing genre of tales whose title contained the element *buile*.

The Term *geilt*

The second lexical item relevant to *Buile Shuibhne* is *geilt*, for which four main denotations are given by DIL: 1. “one who goes mad from terror”; 2. “a panic-stricken fugitive from battle”; 3. “a crazy person living in the woods and supposed to be endowed with the power of levitation”; 4. “a lunatic.”¹¹⁰ These four definitions reflect the two main types of sources in which the term is found: battle descriptions, and as the soubriquet of the hero of our tale. While DIL’s list is not exhaustive, a great many of its examples derive from the Suibhne group of texts (*Buile Shuibhne* and *Cath Muighe Rath*); from *Cath Almaine*, its sources (*Chronicum Scotorum*, for example) or derivatives (*Fragmentary Annals*, for example¹¹¹); and from texts such as *Cath Fionntrágha* that are later in date to or whose use of *geilt* derives¹¹² from *Buile Shuibhne*.

The third definition is of interest, as other texts that might independently confirm such a meaning, with one notable exception, do not survive. One wonders, then, what other texts apart from *Buile Shuibhne* (if any) were excerpted to arrive at such a definition. The wording in DIL is very close to that given by O’Keefe¹¹³ so that one wonders whether that was the source: “a madman [. . .] the word seems to have been applied specially to a crazy person living in woods; also endowed with the power of flying.”

109 Max Wehrli, *Literatur im deutschen Mittelalter: eine poetologische Einführung* (Stuttgart: Philip Reclam, 1984), 108.

110 As there is no mention in the text of the moon or of its influence on the mental state of Suibhne, the term “lunatic” is, strictly speaking, incorrect and misleading; the term “madman” is preferred.

111 See Joan Newlon Radner, *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978).

112 Cecile O’Rahilly, *Cath Finntrágha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1962), xvii–xviii, 76, n. 449.

113 See O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne* (see note 2), 102 *sv* *geilt*.

The most notable example of the term *geilt* outside of the Suibhne group of texts is in the Old-Norse *Kongs Skuggsjo*, a *Speculum Regale*, dated to ca. 1250¹¹⁴ by which time *Buile Shuibhne* had certainly been written. It contains a fascinating collection of *mirabilia* pertaining to Ireland, among which is an account of the *geilt*. As to its source, Meyer was of the opinion that nowhere did the narrative contain “the slightest indication of dependence on any authority except that of oral and local tradition.”¹¹⁵ On what authority Meyer made his statement we do not know. It is, however, a statement of great relevance to the question of the possible parallel but independent co-existence of Suibhne materials in the written and non-written literary streams of tradition, which in the case of the non-written stream does not begin to emerge to any great extent until the post classical period.

The similarity of this description with the general presentation of Suibhne is remarkable so that one wonders whether it drew on a version of *Buile Shuibhne* or on its oral sources, if oral sources that text had. The translation, which I quote *in extenso*, runs as follows: “There is also one thing, which will seem very wonderful, about men who are called gelt. It happens that when two hosts meet and are arranged in battle-array, and when the battle-cry is raised loudly on both sides, that cowardly men run wild, and lose their wits from the dread and fear which seize them. And then they run into a wood away from other men, and live there like beasts, and shun the meeting of men like wild beasts. And it is said of these men that when they have lived in the woods in that condition for twenty years, then feathers grow on their bodies as on birds, whereby their bodies are protected against frost or cold; but the feathers are not so large that they may fly like birds. Yet their swiftness is said to be so great that other men cannot approach them, and greyhounds just as little as men. For these people run along the trees almost as swiftly as monkeys or squirrels.”¹¹⁶

The word *geilt* as a designation for one who is mentally unsound occurs in a limited range of narrative or lexical sources from the Old Irish period onwards, often and most notably as a soubriquet for the hero of our tale. It is important to point out that nowhere in the three¹¹⁷ surviving legal texts in which the mentally unstable are mentioned does the term *geilt* occur, surprisingly so in the case of *Do Drúthaib, Meraib ocus Dásachtaib* with its focus on the mentally ill. The fact that *geilt* does not occur as a legal term but was confined to narrative texts or qua-

¹¹⁴ See Kuno Meyer, “The Irish Mirabilia in the Norse ‘Speculum Regale’” *Ériu* 4 (1910): 1–16; here 15.

¹¹⁵ Meyer, “The Irish Mirabilia in the Norse ‘Speculum Regale’” (see note 114), 14–15.

¹¹⁶ Meyer, “The Irish Mirabilia in the Norse ‘Speculum Regale’” (see note 114), 11–12.

¹¹⁷ See note 10.

si-historical narratives (such as the so-called *Fragmentary Annals* of Ireland or *Cath Fionntrágha*) suggests that the *geilt* may have simply been a literary creation.

The earliest example of the use of *geilt* as a soubriquet is found in the ninth-century stray verses, attributed to *Suibne Geilt*, preserved in the *Codex Sancti Pauli* in which is described his little oratory at *Túaim Inbir*, presumably the establishment in modern-day Westmeath.¹¹⁸ The words *Túaim Inbir* are glossed *barr edin* (i.e., “ivied top”). While it is impossible on linguistic or textual grounds to trace a direct line of descent from the *Suibhne* of *Buile Shuibhne* back to the *Suibne Geilt* of these shards of an earlier, sparser attested tradition, a knowledge of this earlier verse (certainly of the gloss or of the tradition represented by the gloss) is reflected in one of the poems (§ 27.2d) of the later *Buile Shuibhne* (noted already by Murphy).¹¹⁹ It is impossible to prove or disprove whether the line in question¹²⁰ is a genuine reflex of the *Codex Santi Pauli* verse or whether the *Codex* and the lines in *Buile Shuibhne* merely represent evidence for the independent attestation of a common tradition some three hundred or more years apart.

Another early attestation of the word *geilt* is found in a stanza preserved in the vernacular glossary *Sanas Cormaic* (ca. 900), in which the speaker refers to himself with the words *am geilt ghánd*, about which DIL (C103.68) suggests “spoken by *Suibne Geilt*?” DIL’s tentative connection with *Suibhne* is perhaps due to this same verse being found (as stanza § 27.9) in *Buile Shuibhne*.¹²¹ However attractive such an early example might be, it is more likely that what we have here is an example of a stray verse originally unconnected with *Suibhne* being used by the compiler of *Buile Shuibhne* due to its containing the word *geilt* and there being a suitable context to which to transfer it.

A number of annalistic entries pertaining to the battle of Almain (fought in 722) attest to the use of *geilt* to describe one who loses his reason due to the horror

118 See Aubrey Gwynn and Richard Neville Haddock, *Mediaeval Religious Houses: Ireland: With an Appendix to Early Sites* (Harlow: Longmans, 1970), 408.

119 Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 113, n. 1.

120 The reading of MS B is *mh'aonar dhamh a mbarr eidhin*, of MS K *m'aonar i mbarraibh eidhinn*.

121 A copy of the same stanza occurs in the commentary to *Amrae Columb Chille* (Whitley Stokes, “The Bodleian Amra Choluimb Chille,” *Revue Celtique* 20 (1899): 31–55, 132–83, 248–89, 400–37; here 412, § 137) so that it would appear that at least this section of the commentary dates to around 900, the date conventionally given to *Sanas Cormaic*. However, would we not expect *im geilt gainn* (with correct Old Irish inflection of the adjective) if this is to accord with such an early date? The reading *gann* (§ 27.2d) appears to be correct as it is in rhyming position with *-chlann* in line d. Another example of such non-inflection of the attributive adjective is found in the line *sirfidh Éirinn 'na gheilt ghlas* (§ 6.6c).

of battle: these include *Chronicum Scotorum* (*sub anno* 718) and the *Annals of Tigernach* where Latin *volatiles* is glossed *gealta* and *geltai* in the *Chronicum* and *Tigernach* respectively. These and other annalistic entries served as the nucleus for the literary treatment of the battle of Almhain, in the form of the tenth-century narrative *Cath Almaine*, a text outside the Suibhne group, in which a number of entries from the annals have been taken over to form the basis of the narrative.¹²²

Looking to the root word *gealt-*, a number of its derivatives may be mentioned here: the abstract noun *geltacht* explained as “panic, terror, frenzy, insanity, state of being a *geilt* (characterized by e.g. living in the wilderness, leaping or flying, eating raw food and having visions)” (DIL *sv geltacht*), as well as its late formation *gealtachas* meaning “panic, terror, madness” (DIL *sv geltachas*); secondly *geilt glinne*, (formed through confusion or analogy with *genit*) rendered “sprite of the glen” by DIL, a malevolent female supernatural entity related or similar to other battlefield entities such as the *bocánach*, *badb* or demon *aeóir*, with which it usually occurs in texts. A further set of derivatives will be discussed below.

The Language and Date of *Buile Shuibhne*

Before moving on to consider possible readings of the narrative, something must be said about the language and date of *Buile Shuibhne*, as any interpretation should obviously tally with the actual date of composition of the text. The convention¹²³ hitherto, as far as I can see, has been to treat *Buile Shuibhne* as a twelfth-century text.¹²⁴ Both the language of *Buile Shuibhne* and its dating involve

¹²² See Pádraig Ó Riain, *Cath Almaine* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978), ll. 90, 104, 184.

¹²³ Notably, Ruth Lehmann *Fled Dúin na nGéd* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1964), xx, describes the language of *Buile Shuibhne* as belonging to “the late twelfth or thirteenth century”. Apart from O’Keefe (see next note), I believe she is the only other person to consider than the text might not date from the twelfth century.

¹²⁴ See, for example O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne* (see note 2), iv, who appears to have modified his earlier more considered opinion that “On linguistic grounds it may be safely said, I think, that the text might have been composed at any time between the years 1200 and 1500” (O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne* (*The Frenzy of Suibhne*) [see note 2], xvi); Myles Dillon, *The Cycle of the Kings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 68; Myles Dillon, *Early Irish Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 94; Ruth P. Lehmann, “A Study of the *Buile Shuibhne*” *Études Celtiques* 6 (1953–1954): 289–311; here 289; James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature* (see note 6), 130; Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, “Pagans and Holy Men: Literary Manifestations of Twelfth-Century Reform,” *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, ed. Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 143–61; here 157; and Jan Erik Rekdal, “From Wine

highly complex and sometimes contradictory issues that must for the moment¹²⁵ remain unresolved although some preliminary comments may be made for present purposes. In very general terms, the language of *Buile Shuibhne* displays a lack of homogeneity that betrays, first and most obviously, the compilatory nature of the text, the accretionary nature of its language, and the variation and hybridity so characteristic of any “middle period” in a language. More specifically, when we examine the key indicators of linguistic stability or linguistic change (i.e., verbal morphology, pronominality, and syntax), we find that these display such a level of fluidity that it precludes what modern tastes would describe as linguistic coherence or uniformity.

This middle period, described by O’Keefe¹²⁶ as “that indefinite period which covers late Middle-Irish and early Modern-Irish” is one marked by variation, confusion, and tension between the old and the new, more specifically between *tradition of form* and *innovation of form*, reflected in the co-existence of traditional and neologistic forms. This tension within the literary language was caused by unsustainable pressure from the spoken language and proved uncondusive to ensuring consistency of usage in the written language. It became the main technical (as opposed to socio-political) catalyst for the laying down, in the course of the twelfth century, of the groundwork for a standardized literary language that was to be used during the course of the following four hundred years in the composition of official poetry.¹²⁷

In attempting to establish a feasible and defensible dating for *Buile Shuibhne*, a number of aspects must be considered. Firstly, given the passage of several hundred years between the oldest manuscript (1671–1675) and the putative date of composition of the text, we have no way of knowing what constituted the author’s final text or what relationship that text bears to that which is recorded in

in a Goblet to Milk in Cowdung: The Transformation of Early Christian Kings in Three Post-Viking Tales from Ireland,” *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, ed. Gro Steinsland, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Jan Erik Rekdal, and Ian Beuermann. The Northern World: North Europe and the Baltic c. 400 – 1700 AD; Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 211–67; here 241.

125 Certain syntactic and morphological traits, more redolent of the post-1200 period, lead me to suspect that the twelfth-century dating conventionally given for *Buile Shuibhne* is unsustainable. These will be dealt with in full detail in Feargal Ó Béarra, “Irish Literature during the Long Twelfth Century,” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* (forthcoming).

126 O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne* (*The Frenzy of Suibhne*) (see note 2), xv.

127 For background to the highly polished, wonderfully regulated, and minutely described literary language referred to today as Classical Modern Irish, see Brian Ó Cuív, *The Linguistic Training of the Medieval Irish Poet* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1973).

the manuscripts. The following is but one of many examples that could be cited of the difficulties caused by there being such a gap between the date of the manuscripts and the putative date of composition. In § 50, we find the reading *romc[h] uirthir 'san es mé* from manuscript B (the oldest), whereas manuscript K (the youngest, dated to 1721–1722) does not contain the independent object pronoun *mé* at all, presumably because it is rendered superfluous by the (earlier and more “correct” usage with) infixed object pronoun (*-m-*). As the omission or retention of the final independent pronoun cannot be independently or conclusively verified (by metrical control for example), we have no way of knowing if its absence in K is due to a scribal appraisal of the exemplar or whether it genuinely represents the final authorial *état* of the text. Nor have we any way of knowing whether its inclusion in manuscript B (regardless of its being the oldest manuscript) is scribal or authorial. It could be argued that support for supposing it to be authorial is found in other examples of this tautological construction (such as *úair nommhuirfedh Loingseachán i ndiogail a chaillighi mé día mbeinn ara chumus* (§ 42), and *cidh rottuc ar gealtacht thú* (§ 48) where both manuscripts support the readings with two object pronouns.

Being metrically controlled by a set number of syllables per line, poetry is a useful source of diagnostics for helping to establish a date, and for providing a snapshot of certain features of a text’s language. A significant contribution to our understanding of the text and language of *Buile Shuibhne* was Ruth Lehmann’s attempt “to discover what the oldest group of poems may be by studying the verse, the language, and the version of the story revealed in these oldest poems.”¹²⁸ Lehmann amassed a sizeable collection of linguistic forms that demonstrated to her that some of the poetry in *Buile Shuibhne* was older than the twelfth century, and that allowed her to set up a chronology of the poems relative to each other. While certainly appreciating that “[...] forms can be changed and even archaisms may be introduced”¹²⁹ she did not, however, see the presence of late forms in a poem as evidence of its having been recently composed.

This opinion did not extend, therefore, to seeing late forms for what they are: a reflection of the language of the time the poem (when a non-contemporary, inherited item) was last reworked, or else (where it can be shown that the extant text is not the result of “faulty” transmission) evidence for the state of the language when the poet was active. Thus, rhymes such as *'na gheilt ghlas : raghas* (§ 6.6c); *bhochtán : Bolcáin* (§ 19.12c–d), *soclán : Bolcáin* (§ 21.4b–d); *im gheilt ghann : chlann* (§ 27.9c–d); *theinn : Éirinn* in (§ 83.2c where *Éirinn* is genitive), and

128 Lehmann, “A Study of the *Buile Shuibhne*” (see note 124), 289.

129 Lehmann, “A Study of the *Buile Shuibhne*” (see note 124), 304.

án : Bolcáin (§ 83.21c–d) are examples of the poetry preserving evidence indicative of the language of the poet’s time. Even if one manages to “explain away” these rhymes as examples of “faulty” transmission, it does not change their nature as evidence for the state of the language at the time the poem was last reworked, or in some cases created, as *prima facie* evidence for the final *état* of the text, in which such “irregularity” was considered acceptable usage.

Although poetry is notoriously difficult to date, looking at the poems in *Buile Shuibhne*, they display a range of intricate linguistic (and narrative) strata that suggests that some of them may have been “inherited” by the author while others must have flowed from his own pen. It should be remembered, therefore, that just as “old forms” may be authorial pseudo-archaisms (or indeed genuine survivals), so too “new forms” can be authorial and reflect the contemporary state of the language. The linguistic profile of many of the poems reflects a tension between tradition of form and innovation of form. In poetry, examples of traditional and neologistic forms are sometimes inadvertently recorded because of their use to conform to syllable count. In prose, on the other hand, with its less regulated conditions, the poet might deem many of these forms unnecessary or undesirable. For example, in § 36.20a we find monosyllabic Old Irish 2sg *at*, followed in the next line by *as tú*, the usage that becomes dominant in Early Modern Irish. At § 40.46d, the poet employs the monosyllabic Old Irish 1sg Copula *am*, the Middle-Irish form *isam* a few lines later (§ 40.48c), later still *As mé* (§ 47.3a) and *As misí* (§ 47.4a).

In another example (§ 40.1d), the poet employs a typically Early Modern Irish form *do-ni tú*¹³⁰ with 2sg independent subject pronoun (*tú*) (giving three syllables), while two quatrains later he employs the monosyllabic Old Irish 2sg Copular form *at* (§ 40.3b). In § 40.40c, we find him using the monosyllabic *dá* instead of *agá*, a neologistic variant of the older traditional form. An example of the poet’s exploitation of an earlier form is his use of the (formally Old Irish) deutrotonic verbal form *do-icc* (in § 85.2c) to give two syllables. He was not the first nor the last to turn a trick with this form, a form already yielding¹³¹ in the Old Irish period (700–900) to its prototonic stem *-ticc*, yet here employed in preference to the contemporary form *ticc* (or *tig*). More such instances could be cited.

In all of these examples, we have instances of the use of either neologistic forms instead of the traditional ones or *vice versa*, the choice in each case being dictated by the exigencies of meter. Such variation in acceptable usage typifies

¹³⁰ The reading *do-[g]ni tú* given in O’Keeffe is editorial; a form with loss of the Middle Irish lenited radical would be quite in keeping with Early Modern Irish.

¹³¹ See Kim McCone, *The Early Irish Verb*. 2nd ed. (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1997), 3, 195.

the tension between tradition of form and innovation of form and constituted a formidable tool when placed in the hands of a clever and resourceful artist such as a *narrative poet*.¹³² This variation, therefore, should be viewed not as an indicator of degeneration but as a mark of vitality, a demonstration of the linguistic dexterity and inventiveness of a verbal artist well equipped to exploit the tension between tradition and innovation.

Other examples of forms more redolent of the Early Modern period than of (even Late) Middle Irish are *ro-ling sí* (§ 41) and *ní iarr sibh* (§ 32.5d) both with independent subject pronoun. We also find examples of the independent object pronoun: *berius tú* (§ 32.5b); *nocha misi dobhraith thú* (§ 38.2a) the pronoun *thú* being needed to rhyme with *clú*; *cuiridh é* (§ 40.17c); *atgeoim misi* (§ 52.1c); *ge atch-ífinn thú* (§ 83.3d); *do na dáoinibh atchonncatar thú* (§ 55); *rohadhnacht go n-onóir ag Moling é* (§ 86), and *rochúalaidh ag comhradh iad* (§ 64). Examples such as *ro-len sí é* (§ 39) with both subject and object expressed by independent pronouns become the dominant usage in Early Modern Irish and developed, presumably, from instances with enclitic or nominal subject marker, such as [. . .] *uair roescáoin-siomh misi* (§ 49); *ní thaidhledh-somh é* (§ 64); [. . .] *o dochuir Día ar gealtacht mé* (§ 82); *rofreagair Suibhne é* (§ 74); or *roghabh Moling ar laim é* (§ 86).

We also find examples of the tautological and confused usage involving two object pronouns, where it would appear that the first (infix) pronoun is retained (or remains) as if to anticipate the independent pronoun at the end of the clause: *úair no-m-mhuirfedh Loingseachán i ndiogail a chaillighi mé día mbeinn ara chumus* (§ 42); *cidh ro-t-tuc ar gealtacht thú* (§ 48); or *ro-m-c[h]uirther 'san es mé*¹³³ (§ 50) representing an intermediate stage which preceded the type *ro-len sí é* (§ 39) cited above.¹³⁴

In § 56.4c, we have a metrically guaranteed example of the Early Modern Irish development¹³⁵ *i > ina*. This arose when the earlier Old- and Middle-Irish form of the preposition *i* (“in”), when in relative position, was often replaced by an analogical form *ina*, thus *ina mbíodh* (§ 56.4c) for earlier *i mbíodh*. Two further examples occur in the prose: *ina mbáoi* (§ 35), and the tautological *ropudh maith*

¹³² I suggest the term *narrative poet* to distinguish him from his more illustrious peer, the official court poet.

¹³³ The full sentence reads: *romc[h]uirther 'san es mé go ro mbaiter ann 7 nomadhnaithe iarsin i relic fhíreóin 7 foghebh nemh*.

¹³⁴ The verse *Misi sunn ag Ros mBearaigh / domrad Rónán fo mheabhail* (§ 14.3a-b), which would equate to *Domrad Rónán misi fo mheabhail sunn ag Ros mBearaigh* were it prose, may be another example although such syntax (involving a double pronoun construction) would not be completely unusual in poetry.

¹³⁵ Described as such by DIL, letter I, Column 2.

an magh sa ina rabhamar ann (§ 51). The metrical example shows that the neologistic form (*ina*) was acceptable currency when the poet worked; otherwise, he would have been a syllable short if he had opted for the traditional and “correct” monosyllabic form *i*. This may be an important dating diagnostic as it shows that that section of the text dates from the time the change had started to appear in the written language i.e., no earlier than the end of the twelfth century.

The poem beginning *Mairg fa ttabhraid mna menma* (§ 56) contains much information about the author’s methodology in creating the text. In § 55, three sentences have been taken over from the poem, placed in the mouth of Suibhne as direct speech, and by means of the causal conjunctions *uair* and *dóigh* fused into the new prose composed by the author to accommodate them. Thus, the line *As mairg dobheir taobh re mnáibh* (§ 56.2a) from the poetry becomes *Truagh éimh sin ar Suibhne as mairg dobheir taobh re mnáoi tar eis na mbriathar sin*. The three lines *Maith mo chummáoin ar an mnaoi* (§ 56.3a), [. . .] *tarraidh diom tri cháoga bó / la cáoga each a n-áonló* (§ 56.3c–d) become the prose *Uair ba maith mo chummaoin-si ar an mnáoi romfúagrann samhlaidh, dóigh tucus inn-aonló dhi tri chaoga bó 7 caoga each*. The whole verbal transaction is then disguised by a reversal of sequence i.e., the newly-composed prose being made to introduce the pre-existing poem, thus creating the impression of contemporaneousness between prose and poem.

Looking closer at the prose (§ 55), there appears to be only one suitable dating diagnostic to differentiate between it and the poetry in § 56. While the reading *ina raibhi* of the first sentence of the prose cannot be guaranteed to have been in the author’s text (as he may well have used the older form *i raibhe*), in the case of the poetry the reading *ina mbiodh* (§ 56.4c), being metrically guaranteed and required, shows that at the time the line was composed the disyllabic form (*ina*) with unhistorical relative pronoun existed and was acceptable to the poet.¹³⁶

The whole paragraph (§ 55), it must be said, appears somewhat clumsy of form and confused in its execution. This may be partly due to its being simply dumped into the narrative at this stage whereas it should have occurred earlier in the tale, specifically at § 31. We find, first, a strong verbal echo of § 55’s *Sádhhal sin, a Eorann, ar sé, cidh anshádhhal damh-sa* in § 31’s *Agus is suanach sadail duit-si ar sé 7 ní headh dhamh-sa* especially in the contrasting of Suibhne’s situation with that of Eorann. Secondly, this section also features Eorann taking up with another man, specifically Guaire mac Congail mhic Sgannláin, who along with Eochaidh mac Condlo mhic Sgannláin “had equal title to the sovereignty which

¹³⁶ Presumably, using the disyllabic form *áite* (thus: *Áite i mbíodh treas nó troid*) would not have been possible, as this form did not exist at the time, being first attested in later Modern Irish.

Suibhne had abandoned” ([. . .] *ba comhdhúthaigh dhoibh an righe rofagaibh Suibhne*, § 31). Thirdly, we have another verbal echo between § 31’s *Rosíacht tra Suibne gonige an baile ina*¹³⁷ *raibhe Eorann* [. . .] *Deisidh iarumh an gheilt for fordhorus na boithe i raibhe Eorann, conadh ann itbert* [. . .] and § 55’s *Luidh iarumh Suibhne gusin bhail ina raibhi Eorann co rothoiris ar fordhorus in tighe i mbói an riogan cona banntracht, conadh ann adbert* [. . .].

Moving to § 56, it displays further confusion in that there is little connection, in style or content, between its first three quatrains and the last five. Quatrains 1–3 are a reaction to Eorann’s treachery and cruelty, in which Suibhne speaks in the present tense of what he perceives to be the general deceit of women, while the remaining quatrains consist of Suibhne’s illeistic description of himself that starts in the Imperfect and moves to the Preterite. Notwithstanding the chronological incongruence, the first three quatrains are very reminiscent of some of the later *Dánta Grádha* in which the poet typically laments his ever having loved a woman.¹³⁸ The last quatrains are in a different narrative voice and tense, and in stark contrast to the first three: in their martial bent they are very reminiscent of the spirit of some of the quatrains uttered by Cú Chulainn in *Siaburcharpát Con Culainn* in which he proudly describes his former martial prowess.¹³⁹

Although the presence of a *dúnadh*¹⁴⁰ (between the opening word *Mairg* (an adjective) and the toponym (*Magh*) *Mairge*)¹⁴¹, suggests that the poem is textually intact, it does not follow that the poem has retained its original form or that it might not be an amalgam constructed from two different sources, perhaps when it was reworked for use in *Buile Shuibhne*. A sense of narrative incoherence between the first three quatrains and the remainder of the poem hints at such a likelihood. Notwithstanding a certain degree of narrative incongruence, it seems that § 31, § 32, § 55, and § 56 preserve *fragmenta* of two independent traditions

¹³⁷ MS K has the better reading *i (raibhe)*.

¹³⁸ For examples see Tomás Ó Rathile, *Dánta Grádha* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1926), and Seán Ó Tuama and Thomas Kinsella, *An Duanaire 1600–1900: Poems of the Dispossessed* (Mountrath: Dolmen Press, 1981).

¹³⁹ See Richard Irvine Best & Osborn Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre. Book of the Dun Cow* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1929), ll. 9341–535; and Ó Béarra, “The Otherworld Realm of Tír Scáith” (see note 82).

¹⁴⁰ A technical term (lit: “closing”) to describe the “closure” of a poem, by having its final word or syllable identical or similar to the *tosach* or first stressed word. The presence of a *dúnadh* is generally taken as showing that a poem is complete although in longer compositions it may merely mark the end of a number of internal sections.

¹⁴¹ This place is unidentified but is probably to be located in the proximity of *Sliabh Mairge* (Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* . . . sv *slíab maircce*), modern Slieve Margy not far from Graiguecullen, Co. Carlow.

containing the same narrative detail, i.e., that Suibhne's visit to his wife, who (having abandoned him for another more politically viable paramour) has given him justifiable cause for complaint and regret at his ever having consorted with womankind. Such instances as these demonstrate that the constituent parts of a text need not be the work of a single author but can be an amalgam of various strands of tradition, of various date and origin, but nevertheless function as a single textual entity.

The convention of reconstructing or positing older textual precursors has led to a tendency to ignore younger linguistic forms as mere scribal corruptions or modernizations of “older, more correct” ones. With certain texts, which originate in a much earlier era, this is a legitimate approach. In the case of *Buile Shuibhne*, there are only a small number of forms (“corrupted” or “modernized”) that will bring us very far back. These few forms that can be “sourced” in the Old-Irish period are best described by the (geological) term *erratic*, i.e., survivals within a region of otherwise late twelfth-century forms. The probability of *romgëtt* (§ 40.29b) being evidence of a genuine Old-Irish origin (< *ro-m:gaét*) for that part of the text is unlikely, as suggested by its rhyming with *écc* (reflecting an aural rather than a written origin), and the fact that other forms of the verb (*gonaid*) from which it derives are incorrectly treated in the text (see for example *romgon-sat*, § 20.6a). The form (*acht ce*) *taés* (§ 27.10b), which descends from the Old-Irish1sg present subjunctive of *do-tét*, is similarly an erratic rather than a reflection of an Old-Irish origin for that section in which it appears.

When two forms are found in the one text, it is the younger of the two that should attract our interest as this is evidence of the youngest *sprachschicht* in the text, and therefore of the final *état* of the text.¹⁴² Some of these later forms or usages, which first appear in Early Modern Irish or certainly are unrecorded until that time, and that are more redolent of the subsequent century than of the twelfth, include: the use of prepositional *mar* with a demonstrative¹⁴³ (*súan mar soin*, § 27.1a); the use of the indefinite interrogative pronoun *cúich* (< *cóich*) with an inflected form of the preposition *ó* to denote the subject (*cúich úaibh dhiong-*

142 A perfect example of this is § 36.20a, where it is not the monosyllabic 2sg Old-Irish Copular form *at* that should be the dating diagnostic but the Early Modern Irish equivalent *as tú* found in the next line.

143 All DIL's examples are Early Modern Irish, except for two from the Late Middle-Irish *The Passions and Homilies from the Leabhar Breac*, i.e., *is mar sin is línta in doman* (Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and Homilies from the Leabhar Breac* [Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1887], l. 7664); *is mar sin do lucht in athimráid* (Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and Homilies from the Leabhar Breac* [Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1887], l. 7677), but in these examples *mar* is adverbial (not prepositional).

hbhus isin chath § 56.5c); a small number of lexical items such as *marcaigheacht* (§ 40.20c), *sgāl* (§ 40.41d), the new verbal noun *lúthmhaireacht* (§ 83.16c); and perhaps *copán* (§ 35).

While many of these forms and usages are more suggestive of a post-1200 date, this does not necessarily indicate that the *whole* of the text is post-1200. Rather, it may be a later reworking of earlier materials by an author working during the post-1200 period, perhaps in the first quarter but certainly no later than the middle of the thirteenth century. Such a perfectly plausible scenario as outlined above creates the space where these later linguistic characteristics can be understood and accommodated within the compositional and linguistic totality of the transmitted text. Thus, these Early Modern features are the most important in the text, as they constitute a *terminus post quem* for the final *état* of the text.

We may conclude this sketch of certain aspects of the language of *Buile Shuibhne*, from which—it should be emphasized—only tentative conclusions can be drawn at this stage, by suggesting that certain forms and usages, while present in some twelfth-century texts, nevertheless create a sense that *Buile Shuibhne* is closer to being Early Modern Irish than hitherto considered. The presence of these forms, as well as the general character of some of the poetry, leads me to suspect that a twelfth-century dating for *Buile Shuibhne* is certainly in need of re-examination, possibly of revision and may, in the long-term, prove unsustainable.

Das Ich im Bild¹⁴⁴

Texts of the Self, i.e., in which the overwhelming share of the narrative burden is borne by the first¹⁴⁵ person singular, while certainly not unknown in the medieval vernacular literature of Ireland, are certainly not the norm. Those which have

¹⁴⁴ A term borrowed from Ursula Peters's *Das Ich im Bild: Die Figur des Autors in volkssprachigen Bilderhandschriften des 13. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*. *Pictura et Poesis*, 22 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2008).

¹⁴⁵ In *Buile Shuibhne*, the person of the 1sg can be expressed in any of the following ways: mostly as *-m* subject ending in synthetic active verbal forms; as independent pronoun *mé* (or its contrastive / stressed form *meise* or variants) as subject of analytic active verbal forms; as independent pronoun *mé* as object of passive or active verbal forms; as infixed object pronoun *m* in inherited, stereotyped, or pseudo-archaic passive or active verbal forms; as Copular forms *am* (inherited from Old Irish) or *isam* (a Middle Irishism) with nominal or adjectival predicate; by more detached subject signifiers such as prepositional pronouns e.g., *damh/dam/dom* as subject marker of a verbal noun phrase or prepositional phrase; as *liom / leam* denoting subject in Copu-

survived are in poetic form and, save for a very few such as *Aithbe damsá bés mora*¹⁴⁶, do not run to any great length. In the case of lengthy autodiegetic compositions in prose, these are scarcer still. In “reading” *Buile Shuibhne* as a text of the Self, as a text “whose primary purpose is to articulate a subjective stance which hovers between the subjective and objective worlds,” and in which predominance is given to the voice of the insane, we may say that it is without antecedent not only in medieval Irish literature, but also in medieval Latin or the vernaculars, as Sarah Spence has argued.¹⁴⁷

We are immediately struck by the fact that so much of the narrative load is carried by the 1sg and that its use by the author introduces a degree of self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-scrutiny, hitherto unattested in such concentration in Irish literature. Furthermore, a certain confessionality is achieved in the text through the use of the 1sg, in contrast to the 3sg, a more accusatory narrative *persona*. Thus, we find throughout the text evidence for admission and acknowledgement, on the part of Suibhne, of wrongdoing and of culpability: *as edh romucc as mo riocht / a mhéd ro bhá for eiccíort* (§ 27.6c–d); *as e* [sc. Rónán] *domrad a n-ainríocht* (§ 29.1d); *Críst mac Muire, mor do cacht, / é domrad a n-éccomhnart* (§ 32.11c–d); *dorat misi it chumann-sa / mallacht Rónáin Finn* (§ 40.65a–b); [. . .] *as cóir mo ueth amail atú uair sochaidhe risa ndernus fe[i]n olc* (§ 66); *as é a[s] ruire ’sas rí / antí domrad i neimhthní* (§ 67.3c–d); [. . .] *o dochuir Día ar gealtacht mé* (§ 82); and *o domrad Crist om thír theinn / ar gealtacht ar fhud Eirinn* (§ 83.4c–d).

The dominant role assigned by the author to the 1sg as narrative voice is reflected in the fact that of the some 18,000 words of *Buile Shuibhne*, around 8,000 (or 44%) of them are uttered by Suibhne, as monologue or dialogue poems, or as a number of memorable conversations with the other *personae* that inhabit the text. Despite the conversational context in which much of his speech is presented, we know that a certain amount of Suibhne’s 1sg speech is actually self-directed, taking place as it does when he is alone. In such a narrative situation, the 1sg may function on many levels and contain multiple messages, but surely the most obvious is that of the person who talks to themselves—a socially conditioned (modern?) construct often seen as a signifier of social exclusion and awkwardness, and a classic sign of madness. The text contains many

lar constructions of perception/feeling (with adjectival predicate), or as 1sg possessive pronoun functioning as the object of a verbal noun.

146 Donncha Ó hAodha, “The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare,” *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Liam Breatnach, Kim McCone, & Donncha Ó Corráin. Maynooth Monographs, 2 (Maynooth: An Sagart), 308–31.

147 Sarah Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12.

examples of self-referential statements using the 1sg, such as *As fíor is mé Suibhne Geilt* (§ 27.3d); *Dearbh as misi Suibhne Geilt* (§ 27.4a); *Robo misi an Suibhne seng atchúaladar fir Eireand* (§ 34.2c–d); and *As mé Suibhne sirtheachán* (§ 40.60a).

A recent and particularly germane piece of research on the use of the 1sg in people affected by depression is the investigation of verbal behavior, based on text analysis, carried out by Pennebaker and Ireland, using a computer-aided research model, that produced findings they claim are consistent across different periods, languages and cultures.¹⁴⁸ In discussing depression, they note that “Across multiple studies, we have found that the use of the 1sg person singular pronouns—especially the word “I”—is associated with negative affective states.”¹⁴⁹ While neither clinical depression nor death by suicide feature in the text, nevertheless the analysis done by Pennebaker and Ireland of the work of suicidal versus non-suicidal poets makes for an interesting aside. They found that “poets who eventually committed suicide used 1st person singular pronouns at higher rates than those who did not commit suicide [. . .] Ironically, suicidal poets do not use more negative emotion words than other poets. Overall, suicidal poets’ language use showed that they were *more focused on the self*, and *less socially integrated* [emphasis mine] than non-suicidal poets.”¹⁵⁰

Self-referencing by Suibhne also occurs in the 3sg, a narrative device which heightens the pathos of the plight of which he continuously complains i.e., that he lacks human company, food, sleep, and a roof over his head. There is, furthermore, a desperate poignancy when this distancing takes place in public, to a third party, as the following examples of illeistic self-reference demonstrate: *A bhen, na tairbhir do mac / día na háoine dídine/ lá nach luíngenn Suibhne Geilt* (§ 23.2a–c); *Da festá-sa, a bhenagán / mar atá sunna Suibhne / seach ní fhagaidh cuibhdhe neich / ní fhagaidh nech a chuibhdhe* (§ 43.4a–d); and *An tan as e Suibne Geilt / na fuair cuibhdhe dá cheidsheirc* (§ 56.1c–d). The effect of the author’s use of illeistic speech is to create a distance between the vestiges of *the Self that was* (e.g., *An tan ba-sum Suibhne sruith* § 27.5a) and *the Self that is* (e.g., *Dearbh as misi Suibhne Geilt* § 27.4a), a behavior mirrored in the continuous contrasting by Suibhne of past with present, and of himself with some other, the best example being the thirteen-quaternion poem beginning *An fer ag froig focherd srainn* (§ 27).

148 James W. Pennebaker and Molly Ireland, “Analyzing Words to Understand Literature,” *New Beginnings in Literary Studies*, ed. Jan Auracher and Willie Van Peer (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 24–48; here 44.

149 “Analyzing Words to Understand Literature” (see note 148), 31.

150 “Analyzing Words to Understand Literature” (see note 148), 31.

The presence in the text of a distinct set of derivatives of the root *gealt* suggests awareness on the part of the author of the centrality of the mentally ill individual in the narrative he is creating. The following occur only in *Buile Shuibhne* (mostly in the poetry) or in related texts: *gealtán*¹⁵¹ (§ § 21.4d, 21.2d, 75.10b) “a lunatic, one panic-stricken”; *gealtóg* (§ § 53, 54.3a, 54.3d) “a madwoman”; *gealt-agán*¹⁵² (§ § 71.1a, 74, 75.1a, 75.2a) “a lunatic” according to DIL but perhaps better rendered by “a dear/beloved madman” (cp. *Ísucán, Cúcucán*); *beingheilt* (§ 53) “a madwoman”; *éingheilt (na hÉireann)* (§ 36.20b) “the famous madman (of Ireland)” (trans. O’Keefe); *lúaimhgeheilt* (§ 47.3d) “leading lunatic” (trans. O’Keefe) and *lúaithegeheilt* (in MS K) “nimble madman”; *naoimhgeheilt* (§ § 80.1d, 85.1d) “holy fool, holy madman”; *úairgheilt* § 58.5d¹⁵³ “chilly madman” (trans. O’Keefe); the adjective *gealtach* (§ 21.2d) “crazy, insane”; the abstracts *aithghealtacht* (§ 62) “relapsed madness,” *roi-ghealtacht* (§ 68) “intense madness,” and *bæithghealtacht* (§ 43.6c) “foolish madness,” this latter word, unrecorded by DIL, being also found in the post classical poem *Mairg atá sa mbeathaidh-si*, discussed above.

What is striking about all of these derivatives is that there is no other text in which we find a comparable concentration of terms for the unsound of mind, something that suggests a deliberate expansion on the part of its author of the inherited lexical range of the root *gealt*-. While the presence of *gealtagán* in two other texts may serve as a warning not to presume that the author of *Buile Shuibhne* was responsible for *all* of the derivatives, nevertheless he may very well

151 Three of the four examples given in DIL may ultimately derive from *Buile Shuibhne*: the first certainly does (*misi an gealtán gealtach*, § 21.4d); the second is from the later, thirteenth-century recension of *Cath Muighe Rath* (*bid gealtán truag* O’Donovan, *The Battle of Dun na n-Gedh and the Battle of Magh Rath*, 174); while the third derives from Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (*boisgell .i. geltán*) who, as we saw above, had actually worked with a manuscript of *Buile Shuibhne*. DIL’s final example (*gealtáin gaoithe . . . ag éirge a ngleann*), from a poem by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn († 1591), should be excluded as this most likely refers not to “a lunatic, one panic-stricken” but to a bird of prey known as a *gealtán gaoithe*, which also occur in an Early Modern Irish poem enumerating various birds and animals (William Robert Wilde, “On the Unmanufactured Animal Remains Belonging to the Academy,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 7 [1857–1861] 181–212; here 190), in which coincidentally occurs the phrase in *geilt garg* (William Robert Wilde, “On the Unmanufactured Animal Remains,” 184). A further ground for eliminating the example from the poem by Tadhg Dall might be that it occurs in a text unrelated to *Suibhne*.

152 This word is found as *geltucán* in quatrain 9c of the version of the poem beginning *A ben Gráic, is gráda sain* preserved in the Mo Ling Poems of the Brussels manuscript 5100–5104 (Osborn Bergin et al., *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* [see note 42], vol. II, 26), a version of which is found in *The Birth and Life of Moling* (Whitley Stokes, *The Birth and Life of St. Moling* [see note 30], 36), and as *gealtugan* in the later, thirteenth-century recension of *Cath Muighe Rath* (John O’Donovan, *The Banquet of Dun na n-Gedh, and The Battle of Magh Rath*, . . . 174).

153 The occurrence is in the plural (*úairghealta Eirenn*).

have been the creative source of those that are exclusive to *Buile Shuibhne*. At any rate, such a deliberate undertaking as this attests to his creativity in finding a language within a language to narrate the bewildering experience of one who was mentally ill, to give voice to Suibhne as an *individual* who represents the retreat from convention and from the society that maintains such strictures.

In considering the status of *Buile Shuibhne* as the first text to employ on such a large scale an adequate and sympathetic *parole* to describe the mentally ill as *individuals*, the words of Wehrli come to mind: “Jede Rede bedarf einer Sprache, die bereits als relative Konstante vorhanden ist und wieder durch die Rede bereichert wird,”¹⁵⁴ i.e., Every speech act requires a language which already exists as a relative constant and which becomes enriched by speech.” In giving a voice to one who was mentally ill, the author may be considered an “. . . authentic poet [. . .] one who has crossed the frontier of conventional parlance into uncharted linguistic terrain: he is seeking to hear, as it were, and to articulate for himself that which has not yet come to expression.”¹⁵⁵ In creating this new *parole* and its sympathetic lexicon, the author—by means of the distinctive 1sg *Erzählstimme* that supports his extraordinary and complex creative achievement—brings to medieval Irish literature a new “subjectivity representative of the self.”¹⁵⁶

The prominence given to the 1sg in the text constitutes in effect an individuation of the mentally ill, a cohort otherwise treated in our sources on a group level or at best as a generalized *typus*. Thus, the granting to one of them of a name, of a voice, of a narrative is the humanizing gesture that distinguishes *Buile Shuibhne* from all other texts. The dominance assigned to the 1sg as *Erzählstimme* creates a narrative focus and intimacy of experience for the audience (medieval and modern) that produces an emotional engagement that can only result in compassion toward Suibhne. It is this individuation (that includes granting a central and prolonged position on the narrative stage to the 1sg) that marks *Buile Shuibhne* out not only from other texts of its own period but from those that precede it, and temporal incongruence aside, that marks it as a text very much in the spirit of the Renaissance.

¹⁵⁴ Max Wehrli, *Literatur im deutschen Mittelalter* (see note 109), 104.

¹⁵⁵ Robert W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 2.

¹⁵⁶ Sarah Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (see note 147), 13.

The Question of Interpretation(s)

Great literature, like all great art, comes with its own set of interpretational requisites, the first of which is that it cannot be assigned a single, all-encompassing, definitive meaning or function but must be afforded the freedom to convey a multi-valence of construal, thus allowing a reading on any one of the multiple levels contained within its referential totality but with no ensuing “loss of hermeneutical potential.”¹⁵⁷

Some commentators have seen in the text a connection with the political events of the twelfth century, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh in particular seeing it as a literary manifestation of the Church Reform movement.¹⁵⁸ Most recently, Jan Erik Rekdal has argued that *Buile Shuibhne* belongs to a group of texts whose message is that the “road to kingship is to go through the Church.”¹⁵⁹ Of course, the pivotal question here is whether the text constitutes a contemporary reaction to contemporary events (but that this is not explicitly stated in the narrative *per se*) or if it is a re-imagining of past events.

The question, as much as its answer, has a bearing on the date of the text and, as a consequence, on how it should be interpreted. Certainly, an earlier dating than the one I propose would better accommodate a putative reading of the text as a critique of kings who opposed the twelfth-century reform or who did not surrender fully to the Church’s authority. However, as the language of the text does not support such an early dating as the first half of the twelfth century, or even the mid-twelfth century, such an interpretation seems very unlikely. I am unconvinced that *Buile Shuibhne* specifically references the twelfth-century Church Reform or any other such specificity but prefer to see the text in more general non-incident specific terms, as an allegory, as a narrative “which points to but does not spell out the background and foreground, the penumbral field, of an entity or event” as Funk writes when speaking of Biblical parables.¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that the author cannot deliver a clear message, by means of implicit expression, even if what he actually says is minimal but what he intends is maximal.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ A phrase used by Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (see note 155), 134–35.

¹⁵⁸ Ní Mhaonaigh, “Pagans and Holy Men: Literary Manifestations of Twelfth-Century Reform” (see note 124).

¹⁵⁹ Rekdal, “From Wine in a Goblet to Milk in Cowdung: The Transformation of Early Christian Kings in Three Post-Viking Tales from Ireland” (see note 131), 264.

¹⁶⁰ Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (see note 155), 140.

¹⁶¹ Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (see note 155), 142.

To see Suibhne as a figure of kingship is a legitimate and attractive reading, especially given the shift in focus from his earlier Old-Irish hermit/madman *persona* as a *geilt* to the extended treatment of Suibhne's regal character that we find in *Buile Shuibhne*, as that of a fallen king. We have spoken of his fictionality, of his anonymity, of his lack of a pedigree: these are literary devices that allow him to take on a representational role (a *typus*) rather than become a specific and individualized regal figure, so that he is at once one king and all kings. There are certainly good interpretative grounds for reading the text as the representation of a regal leader who loses his power and its trappings due to a refusal to allow church expansion (as represented by Rónán's attempt in § 3 to establish a foundation within Suibhne's territory), which is, after all, the pivotal *mis-en-scène* for the tale. However, despite these possibilities, perhaps it is best to read Suibhne's plight primarily on a human rather than regal level in his representation of a victim of the fall from grace.

Read as a morality tale, we might see the text as containing an implicit disapproval of political violence, an old pre-occupation of clerical authors going back at least as early as *Cáin Adamnáin* (ca. 700). Although the text spells out the consequences of offending the Church, it also allows the Sinner the freedom to atone for the transgression and to redeem themselves. For the narrative is not retributory but redemptive in that it allows the fall from grace and social transformation of the hero from king to holy fool to ultimately become the cathartic journey that permits the flawed individual to attain the pinnacle of human endeavor albeit through the cruel but curative power of suffering and penance.

The redemptive power of suffering becomes a *leitmotif* which amplifies the sense of despair permeating the text, itself accentuated by the self-referential nature of the descriptions we are given of the deprivation that Suibhne suffers. A strong penitential presence, reflected in Suibhne's meager diet of water and watercress, as well as his days of fasting (§ 23.2b–c, and other such references), accompanies the focus on suffering. The misery and anguish of the penitential hue of the text is balanced, if not completely offset, by an emphasis on the beauty of nature, which becomes a source of solace for Suibhne, and which we find so vividly described in some (but let it be noted, not all) of the poems, especially the sixty-five quatrain *A bhennáin, a bhuiredháin* (§ 40) and the eleven-quatrain *Fuar anocht Benna Boirche* (§ 58).

The despair that runs through the text can be seen, in a sense, as part of a wider pre-destined and obligatory process that accompanies suffering (for such is the nature of penance) before redemption and salvation are ultimately achieved. Suibhne's words *as edh sin robhúi i ttoici dhuinn* i.e., "that is what was destined for us" (§ 35), hint at an understanding of destiny becoming salvation in itself. However, despair is counterbalanced by a sub-narrative of hope, mirroring the

biblical significance of hope for those who suffer with Christ, those who shall in time become “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). Perhaps the greatest signifier of despair in the text is the author’s affirmation that its hero though insane is not ignorant of his insanity: *ar isam geilt-si bheos*, i.e., “for I too am a madman” (§ 46)—can there be a reality more desperate? This recognition of his own fall from grace, manifested in his mental instability and physical disfigurement¹⁶² and highlighted by the contrasting of his own misery with the happier lot of others, adds to the humanity of the narrative for the medieval listener but also introduces a profound sense of tragedy for the modern reader.

We might also consider a Janus-type Suibhne caught in a battle between God (for his soul) and his subjects (for his regal status). In choosing a celestial reward over ephemeral earthly power, the spiritual over the profane, he must abandon conventional society and become an outcast. In an evocation of those who “wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Hebrews 11:38), the author forces Suibhne to endure the indignation of a life as a wandering exile in order to achieve the ultimate goal of spiritual salvation. The reality of this choice is crystalized for the audience in the encounter (§ 35) with the taunting Loingseachán in what is probably *the* episode that captures the essence of Suibhne’s transformation, in that his former glory is cruelly contrasted with his present plight:

“Truagh sin, a Suibhne,” ar sé, “conadh é th’ierdraighe bheith amhlaidh sin gan bhíadh, gan digh, gan édach amail gach n-ethaid n-aéerdha, ier mbeith a n-éttaighibh sróldaie síregdha ar eachaibh ána allmurdha co sríanaibh soinemhla dhuit, & mná málla maisceha let & iomad macaomh & míolchon & degháos gacha dána, iomad slúagh, iomdha iolarrdha d’ur-radhuibh & do thaoisechuibh & d’óigthighernaighibh, do brughadhuibh & do bhíatachaibh dot réir. Iomad cúach & copán & benn mbreacegair mbúbhaill im lennuibh somblasda so-óla let bhéos. Dursan duit bheith fon ionnus sin amail gach n-én ttruag ttarimtheachtach ó dhíthribh do dhíthribh.” “Leig as a le, a Loingseacháin,” ar Suibhne, ‘as edh sin robhúi i ttoici dhúinn, & in bhfuilid sgéla mo thíri leat-sa dhamh?”

[“Sad is it, Suibhne,” said he, “that your last plight should be thus, without food, without drink, without raiment, like any bird of the air, after having been in garments of silk and satin on splendid steeds from foreign lands with matchless bridles; with you were women gentle and comely, likewise many youths and hounds and goodly folk of every art; many hosts, many and diverse nobles and chiefs, and young lords, and landholders and hospitallers were at your command. Many cups and goblets and carved buffalo horns for pleasant-flavoured and enjoyable liquors were yours also. Sad is it for you to be in

162 A sure sign of kingship lost; for a discussion, see William Sayers, “Kingship and the Hero’s Flaw: Disfigurement as Ideological Vehicle in Early Irish Literature,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 17.4 (1997): 263–67.

that wise like unto any miserable bird going from wilderness to wilderness.” “Cease now, Loingseachan,” said Suibhne; “that is what was destined for us; but have you tidings for me of my country?”]

Further insights into the author’s putative¹⁶³ treatment of kingship may be found in those sections that deal with the aftermath and consequence of the battle and curse: in particular, the prose of § 15 that leads in to the biting, sarcastic, spiteful attack on Suibhne’s leadership and martial qualities contained in the first few quatrains of the poem¹⁶⁴ in § 16. Very shortly after the onset of the king’s madness (§ 11), the author stages the literary “re-inauguration” of Suibhne, this time as *roi manqué*. The action takes place at the ancient tree (*bile na cille*) of an ecclesiastical site located at a place called, in the text, Cill Riagháin. I am unable to offer an exact location¹⁶⁵ for the place name, or an exact identification of its second¹⁶⁶ element.

163 As my colleague Dr. Gisbert Hemprich points out to me, if kingship really were the *fundamental* theme of *Buile Shuibhne*, a different participant in the battle of Magh Rath—Congal Claon—would have been a far better candidate as the focus of the tale, had he not, of course, been slain in battle, (an inconvenient fact that could easily have been offset by the author’s creative and historical imagination).

164 This poem gives the impression of being a composite of two, perhaps three parts: § § 1–4; § § 6–11; § § 12–13. It seems narratively incongruent and incoherent.

165 According to Hogan (*Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae: An Index, with Identifications, to the Gaelic Names of Places and Tribes*, ed. Edmund Hogan [Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1910], *sv cell riagáin*)—citing as his source the mention of this name in the Rawlinson manuscript of *Beatha Colaím Chille* (i.e., *Betha Coluimb Chille*, ed. Andrew O’Kelleher and Gertrude Schoepperle [Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1918], § 354)—Cill Riagháin is the townland of Kilrean, in the parish of Killybegs Lower, Co. Donegal. Of course, his source is derivative rather than independent, as the compiler of *Beatha Colaím Chille* drew on *Buile Shuibhne* for this part of his own text. (Kilrean is located some 180 km from the scene of the battle). Hogan’s identification was (presumably) O’Keefe’s source (O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne (The Frenzy of Suibhne)*, 86; O’Keefe, *Buile Shuibhne*, 162). Pádraig Ó Riain (“The Materials and Provenance of “*Buile Shuibhne*” [see note 93] 183) offered no exact location merely noting that he knew of no independent references to the place. More recently however, he locates it, as Hogan did, in the parish of Killybegs Lower, Donegal (Pádraig Ó Riain, *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* [Dublin: Four Courts Press], 536). An alternative location for Cill Riagháin is suggested by Brian Lacy, who states that it is “actually probably the early church site of Kilrean [. . .] between Glenties and Ardara” (*Cenél Conaill and the Donegal Kingdoms AD 500–800* [Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006], 235).

166 Two forms, *Riaghán* and *Ríoghán* in the nominative case, are the source of the confusion. It would appear that both names refer to the one person. A saint called *Cruimther Riagáin*, described in a gloss as the patron of Achadh Conaire, finds mention in Mícheál Ó Cléirigh’s calendar of saints *Féilire na Naomh nÉireannach* as well as in other sources (See John O’Donovan, *The Martyrology of Donegal. A Calendar of the Saints of Ireland*. Translated from the original Irish

Given the association¹⁶⁷ between the *bile* (i.e., a sacred, venerated, ancient tree) and regal inauguration sites, perhaps the choice of venue, despite its possibly being fictional¹⁶⁸, is not as random as it might appear at first. In choosing to locate Suibhne's first public sighting after the battle of Magh Rath at a sacred tree, and choosing as his throne *bile na cille* (§ 15), the choice of location could be understood allegorically as representing the symbiosis of the ecclesiastic (*cill*) and secular (*bile*) realms. More specifically, the author may have chosen the fictional location and the generic *bile na cille* in an attempt to avoid the specificity of fact in favor of the generality of fiction, thus allowing him to speak of a type (*typus*) of king, represented albeit by the figure of Suibhne, rather than of any particular and individual monarch.

by the late John O'Donovan, edited, with the Irish text, by James Henthorn Todd and William Reeves [Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1864], 214). Pádraig Ó Riain, in his recent *A Dictionary of Irish Saints*, in normalizing to *Ceall Ríogháin*, takes the second element as deriving from the name of an obscure saint named *Ríoghán* “whose name derives from *rí*, ‘king’” (Pádraig Ó Riain, *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* [Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011], 536). That a derivation from *rí* (*ríg*), (though not straightforward as it necessitates ignoring an equally plausible derivation from *riag* (meaning “punishment, execution, torture”), is more probable is perhaps suggested by the use of the adjective *rígda* (i.e., “royal”) to describe the saint (*cruimthir Rígan rígda*) in the twelfth-century *Féilire hUí Gormáin*, for which see Whitley Stokes, ed. *Féilire hUí Gormáin. The Martyrology of Gorman. Edited from a manuscript in the Royal Library, Brussels, with a Preface, Translation, Notes and Indices* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1895), 152, August 9. We have no way of knowing if the author meant either of the two suggested Donegal locations at all, or whether he was attracted to the name simply because it contained an echo of the word for “king.” If the latter was indeed the case, as the spelling with the diphthong *-ia-* has been retained (rather than being modified to *Ríogháin*), we must presume that that particular spelling is merely a variation of *Ríogháin*, and that it was not understood as being connected with the different root *riag-*.

167 For further details on the *bile* or sacred tree, as well as its association with regal inauguration, see A. T. Lucas, “The Sacred Trees of Ireland,” *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 68 (1963): 16–54; Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997), 387–88; Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 59; *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae: partim hactenus ineditae ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum recognovit prolegomenis notis indicibus instruxit*, ed. Charles Plummer, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), clii, for hagiographic texts.

168 In the absence of a conclusive identification or of any reason for locating the scene in *Tír Chonaill* (if in *Tír Chonaill* it be), *Cill Riagháin* may be taken perhaps as an example of the creation, by the author of *Buile Shuibhne*, of a fictitious location, one of a number contained in the text. In doing so, one is forced once again to address the apposition between fictionality and historicity and tease out the how and when of distinguishing between veracity and fictionality within the narrative. Notwithstanding the various difficulties associated with the name, a derivation of *Cill Riagháin*/*Ríogháin* from the word for “king” (*rí*) is attractive for reading § 15 as a statement on the theme of the *roi manqué*.

These few paragraphs can be seen as describing the public “re-inauguration” of the transformed Suibhne, an open exposure of his mental and physical metamorphosis from valiant king to feathered, taloned creature who eschews the ground and whose new regal seat has become the *bile*. The disfiguring metamorphic aspect of his cursing can be read as the physical and public manifestation of the blemish that marks the *roi manqué*. Repeatedly in the text, starting with his very first public utterance (§ 14) since fleeing the battle, Suibhne states that his *appearance* has been altered (*a n-ainriocht* § 29.1d) or has left him (*as mo riocht* § 27.6c) because of his cursing by Rónán, and ultimately by God. His very first words in the narrative are the poem beginning *A óga, tigidh a lle*, i.e., “O warriors, come hither,” in which he addresses his former subjects: *Misi sunn ag Ros mBearaigh / domrad Ronán fo mheabhail / romsgar Dia rem dheilbh nad ró / sgairaidh re mh'eol, a ogó* i.e., “Here at Ros Bearaigh am I, Ronan has put me under disgrace, God has severed me from *my form* [emphasis mine], know me no more, O warriors.” (§ 14).

His physical transformation serves to highlight his unsuitability to remain in or indeed return to the kingship, a fact further reinforced by the inability of his former subjects to recognize him. In what amounts to a true demonstration of the breakdown in trust between ruler and subject, Suibhne becomes so utterly unrecognizable to his former subjects, (who will from now on spend much of their time pursuing him in an attempt to “rehabilitate” him), that he has become sexless—his former subjects not knowing any more whether he be man or woman.

Conclusion

While by no means a clinical description of mental illness from the Middle Ages, *Buile Shuibhne* provides us nevertheless with an insight into the mind of the creator of an imaginative interpretation of the circumstances leading up to and following the psychological disintegration of an individual. The author must have been a remarkable person, someone who perhaps knew only too well the inner plurality that all great artists need if they are to deal in a competent and sympathetic manner with the various voices that inhabit the human mind. He has implicitly acknowledged, by means of the centrality given to the 1sg, the primacy of that voice of the inner monologue. Suibhne’s is a voice laden with multiple layers of semiotic code for which the external text serves as the conduit that delivers to the outside world the verbalized thoughts formed as part of the psychological struggle taking place on the front line of his disturbed mind. That inner monologue, once externalized in the text, becomes an *epimone* of sorts that pulsates (sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly) through the text from start to finish.

By the time the audience hears of Suibhne's (pre-ordained) murder, a transformation has taken place, one that has been gestating during the course of the tale, one that will rival the initial change which saw the hero transformed from king to madman. This is the ultimate *conversio*: from *geilt* ("madman") to *naoimhgheilt*¹⁶⁹ ("holy madman"), a remarkable turnabout for which the author coined the compound *naoimhgheilt*, a term carrying with it echoes of St Paul's Fools for Christ (1 Corinthians 4:10).

When considered in the light of the medieval concept of life as a journey, perhaps best exemplified in the thirteen *sermones*¹⁷⁰ attributed to Columbanus of Bobbio (†615), we can interpret Suibhne's wanderings (*eachtra* as Ó Cléirigh termed it), as a metaphor for penance, as an expression of his own personal *via paenitentiae*. The author has Suibhne embark on a *peregrinatio pro amore dei* of sorts, forcing him to leave the life and home to which he was accustomed and wander the world in search of redemption and salvation. He is the one who, from the very onset of his madness was filled with *miosgais gach ionaidh ina mbiodh 7 serc gach ionaidh noco roichedh* i.e., "disgust for every place in which he used to be and desire for every place which he had not reached" (§ 11). In a sense, he becomes a seeker, a *homo viator* on the cathartic journey through life in search of theosis and communion with God. The description of Suibhne as being *ar faoinnel 7 ar folúamhain sechnóin an domhain* (§ 5) i.e., "wandering and flying throughout the world"—especially the choice of the *world* rather than just Ireland—reflects such a universal understanding and may very well contain an echo of the "wanderers among the nations" of Hosea 9:7. This view of Suibhne as a wanderer in search of God is supported by the description of him as Suibhne the Searcher, i.e., *As mé Suibhne sirtheachán* (§ 40.60a), the word *sirtheachán* possibly¹⁷¹ a coinage of the author's, and in the line *sirfidh Éirinn 'na gheilt ghlas* (§ 6.6c), i.e., "He will roam through Erin as a stark¹⁷² madman." Such a reading of the text is probable when one considers that *Buile Shuibhne*—exactly like the earlier redemption- and salvation-themed *immrama* tales—is characterized not by stasis but by wandering.

Ultimately, the textual landscape created in *Buile Shuibhne* is that of the wanderings of one who comes to know loss, but a loss that leads to heavenly gain.

¹⁶⁹ Found twice in the text: § 80.1d, § 85.1d.

¹⁷⁰ See G. S. Murdoch Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957).

¹⁷¹ This the only example of word *sirtheachán* recorded by DIL.

¹⁷² The adjective *glas*, as used here, may contain an echo of the meaning "stranger, foreigner" > "wanderer" contained in the term *cú glas*, for which see DIL C. 567.

The array of ways in which this loss is made manifest can be reduced to three: loss of reason, loss of past glory, but loss also of infernal damnation. By his rejection of this world, of the sphere of convention that accommodates regal power and its associated violence, Suibhne becomes (through the corporality of his loss, i.e., his long-term mental suffering and physical deprivation) one who was predestined to inhabit “a space of antisocial, apolitical, and paradoxically free individuation” as Julia Kristeva has described madness.¹⁷³ It is this space within a space, this liminal place within the world of God but without the world of Man, that will become the site of his redemption. This is the lonely periphery he is predestined to inhabit in his solitary public search for salvation; the only arena in which society will grant him that space that will, in the end, allow him to set himself free.¹⁷⁴

173 Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (1987; New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 235.

174 Dedicated to the memory of Breda Lewis (1935–2009) of Ballyboro, Co. Wexford, to whom was always melodious the converse of Suibhne.

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At the Crossroads of Religion, Magic, Science and Written Culture

The Role of Textual Amulets in Medieval Healing¹

In the Middle Ages, books and scripts were regarded not only as texts but also as material and spiritual objects which could affect the life of humans. Especially in healing, words written or spoken were extremely powerful, and often a salient part of the therapeutic act we might also call magic. This chapter will deal with the phenomenon called ‘textual amulets,’ i.e., short protective texts to be recited and especially written on parchment, paper, leaves, or other blank surfaces and worn on the body. This article analyzes an Occitan remedy collection from the late thirteenth or fourteenth century,² which contains a relative abundance of this kind of word magic. The purpose of the study is to show the role of textual amulets in terms of health and mental health; and on the other hand, to reveal the psychology of using written words in healing in general in the textual framework of the Mediterranean and Western European later Middle Ages.

When Donald C. Skemer, curator of manuscripts at the Princeton University Library, found parchment sheets with handwritten quasi-liturgical formulas and misquoted scripture, he first began to study a little-known dimension of medieval literacy and written culture. Soon, however, he realized that those ephemeral parchment pieces had to be understood also as a ritual practice that most people

¹ This article has been written within the project “Medicine without Doctors: Sexuality, Sleep and Sound Mind. Determinants of Health in Medieval Vernacular Remedy Tradition,” funded by the Academy of Finland.

² Cambridge (UK), Trinity College Library, R.14.30, fols. 143v–161r; Paul Meyer, “Recettes médicales en provençal,” *Romania* 32 (1903): 268–99; Clovis Brunel, “Recettes médicales du XIII^e siècle en langue de Provence,” *Romania* 83 (1962): 145–82; Maria Sofia Corradini Bozzi, “Per l’edizione di opera mediche in occitanico e in catalano: un nuovo bilancio della tradizione manoscritta e dei fenomeni linguistici,” *Rivista di Studi Testuali* 3 (2001): 127–95; Susanna Niiranen, “Authority of Words: The Healing Power of Vernacular, Latin and Other Languages in an Occitan Remedy Collection,” *Mirator* 12 (2011): 54–75; see also <http://www.glossa.fi/mirator/pdf/i-2011/theauthorityofwords.pdf> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2013); Susanna Niiranen, “Mental Disorders in Remedy Collections: A Comparison of Occitan and Swedish Material,” *Mental (Dis)order in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Susanna Niiranen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa. *Later Medieval Europe*, 12 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 151–76.

would call magic.³ Following Skemer's seminal work, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (2006), these brief, apotropaic texts are termed 'textual amulets' also in this study and they deserve to be examined not only as physical evidence of variations of medieval written culture, but as a phenomenon "at the nexus of religion, magic, science and written culture."⁴

Most medieval amulets, textual or other, as prescribed in medical texts, were not designed to last longer than the ailment that caused them to be made, so there is not a large amount of evidence left. What is more, the principal focus of scholarship by historians of medicine has traditionally been primarily on learned conceptions and theories of medieval medicine rather than 'popular' ideas such as amulet use. However, a range of evidence outside the university setting exists in a large amount of surviving sources written in various languages, for health and healing were major issues also for medieval people at all social levels and age groups. Despite their "disorganized appearance, poor Latin, nebulous conceptual framework, admixtures of magic and folklore, and general lack of those positive features that historians attribute to ancient or later medieval medicine,"⁵ diverse medical sources, such as medical recipe collections, have recently served an increasingly active group of scholars to probe the issue further.⁶

As stated above, it was not rare to mingle magic with pharmaceutical preparations, but it was not standard.⁷ The Occitan remedy collection studied in this article contains a handful of examples of magical remedies and is therefore rather unique, at least among Occitan material. The amount of word magic (charms,

3 Donald C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), vii.

4 Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 5.

5 These characteristics are often associated with medical writings of early medieval western Europe, but also with medieval popular medicine, Peregrine Horden, "What's Wrong with Early Medieval Medicine?," *Social History of Medicine* 24.1 (2011): 5–25; here 5.

6 While historians previously tended to focus on university medicine, vernacular medical texts in particular were left mostly to philologists. The tendency is still the same even if the research situation is gradually becoming more balanced. See, Monica Green, "Integrative Medicine: Incorporating Medicine and Health into the Canon of Medieval European History," *History Compass* 7.4 (2009): 1218–34; here 1222; especially the study of Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English material has been active; see, e.g., Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England: Introduction and Texts* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1990); and the contributions to *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, ed. Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta. Studies in English Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); see also a special issue of *Social History of Medicine* on Medieval Medicine ed. Clare Pilsworth and Debby Banham, "Medieval Medicine: Theory and Practice," *Social History of Medicine* 24.1 (2011).

7 Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (see note 6), 1.

conjurations, incantations, prayers, bits of liturgical or other Christian texts) in the recipe collection is almost 10 percent (30 items of a total of 337 recipes). By including all kind of magic in recipes, the amount would be noticeably larger. Generally, it is difficult to define a “magical” cure and to distinguish it from other forms of healing, as perhaps exemplified in the practice of cooking dove excrement in vinegar in the belief that it would cure toothache. Despite certain substances the medicinal efficacy of which has been proved by modern bio-medicine,⁸ for us today most medieval recipes offering remedies using herbs, animals, stones, or words represent matters of belief, not of reason or experience.

However, there is no physical evidence of textual amulets as such, e.g., fragmentary pieces of parchment filled with protective or healing texts, for the collection in question only shows and advises which words and signs should be written, on which material (parchment, paper, plant parts, wax, lead tablet, even egg, etc.), for which problem (fevers, bleeding, giving birth, copulation, conceiving, varying moods, insomnia, drunkenness, theft, etc.), and where the amulet should be placed (e.g., for an insomniac under the head/on the pillow, for a person suffering varying moods around the neck, etc.). In this article, I will concentrate on recipes which explicitly indicate that words, letters or signs of a charm should be written down and then worn in a specific way on the body.

In the following I will introduce the medical recipe genre in general as well as review previous studies on textual amulets within this genre. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of textual amulets in late medieval society, a sub-chapter takes a look at the textual culture in the larger context. I will also provide some useful terminology associated with word magic through definitions of charms, spells, incantations, talismans, and amulets. Subsequently, I will examine the textual amulets in relation to the materials and the means (e.g., religious connotations, cryptic inscriptions, rituals) they included, with the aim of expanding our knowledge of their anonymous producers and the possible target audience.

8 Memory Elvin-Lewis, “Should We be Concerned about Herbal Remedies,” *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 75.2–3 (2011): 141–64; Craig D. Brater, Walter J. Daly, “Clinical Pharmacology in the Middle Ages: Principles that Presage the 21st Century,” *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics* 67.5 (2000): 447–50.

The Genre of Recipes and Previous Studies on Textual Amulets

Based on the *materia medica*⁹ tradition and *experimenta*¹⁰ or *empirica*, vernacular recipe collections were often produced and used outside of the university milieu. They encompass attitudes, ideas, and practices that have been called ‘popular culture,’ ‘folklore,’ or ‘local culture.’ Perhaps not the most accurate, but widely used is the term ‘popular medicine’ in this context.¹¹ According to Danielle Jacquart, *empiriques* mainly consisted of lay healers in the countryside who frequently provided treatments for a special group of ailments such as fever cures. At least clerks, notaries, artisans (e.g., dyers), itinerant drink sellers, pepperers and herbalists are distinguishable professions among *empiriques*.¹² There were no special healer groups for mental health besides caretakers in a few asylums and for certain mental conditions including exorcism and disorders caused by demons, which were actually cases for priests.¹³

⁹ Medieval and later pharmacology owes much to Greek and Latin writings, such as Dioscorides’s and Pliny the Elder’s (both first century C.E.) works *De materia medica* (better known by its Latin title) and *Historia Naturalis*, respectively, which in turn had relied on their predecessors. These compilations describe plants, animal ingredients, minerals, and their medicinal use. Several medieval herbals, lapidaries, or bestiaries are based on the material from *materia medica*, Jerry Stannard, “The Herbal as a Medical Document,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 43 (1969): 212–20; here 214; Iolanda Ventura, “Un manuale di farmacologia medievale ed i suoi lettori,” *La Scuola Medica Salernitana. Gli autori e i testi*, ed. Danielle Jacquart and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: Sismel Galluzzo, 2007), 465–534; here 466; Minta Collins, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Tradition*, British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London and Toronto: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2000), 31–93; as to challenges in differentiating related genres, see Alain Touwaide, “Pharmaceutical Literature,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms, Methods, Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 1979–2000; an overview of the textual production of the *Artes liberales*, *Artes mechanicae* and *Artes magicae* is provided in Bernhard Dietrich Haage, Wolfgang Wegner, Gundolf Keil, and Helga Haage-Naber, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Grundlagen der Germanistik, 43 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2007).

¹⁰ These are empirically proven remedies; see Faith Wallis, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*. Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures, 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 401.

¹¹ According to Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (see note 6), ix, popular medicine indicates “non-theoretical medicine exclusively concerned with the therapeutic administration of naturally occurring *materia medica*.” It is synonymous with terms ‘ethnopharmacy,’ ‘ethnomedicine,’ ‘ethnoiatry’ or ‘folk medicine.’

¹² Danielle Jacquart, *Le milieu médical en France du XIIe au XVIe siècle*. En annexe 2e supplément au “Dictionnaire” d’Ernest Wickersheimer. Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes, 46 (Geneva: Droz; Paris: Champion, 1981), 27–46; here 44–46.

¹³ See, Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, “Demoniac Possession as Physical and Mental Disturbance in the Later Medieval Canonization Processes,” *Mental (Dis)order in Later Medieval Europe* (see note 2);

The anonymous Occitan manuscript R.14.30 is currently housed in Trinity College Library in Cambridge. The manuscript also contains other medical writings the compiler or compilers of which remain unknown. However, its compactness together with its unfinished appearance indicates practical use of a medical text. The text was created in the region of Provence or Languedoc, but it was brought to England early, possibly already in the fourteenth century.

Only one type of healer, *metge* ('physician' in Occitan), is mentioned in the recipe collection in question.¹⁴ The word 'physician' appears in a recipe for the diagnosis of leprosy. Diagnosis is made through the observation of change in lip color. The cause for the darkened lips is the melancholic humor (*malenconic humor*), or black bile, and the consultation of a physician, (*metge*) is advised.¹⁵ The connection between leprosy and melancholic humor was familiar to the medical authorities,¹⁶ whence it was transferred to the recipe collections. The only reference to a physician might suggest that domestic, monastic or other communal healers took care of common diseases, but leprosy as a more severe condition would have needed a physician's consultation for proper treatment. Another reference to a person is a certain Berenger Pallada's father, a local inhabitant who is said to know a cure for rheumatism.¹⁷ Compared with learned medical texts, which contain references to ancient and medieval medical authorities, general references to leeches, doctors, physicians, and masters prevail in more popular registers of writing.¹⁸ In this case, however, we have a very meager number of mentions of both authorities (none) and practitioners (one or two).

Nevertheless, chronological layers of medical and pharmacological ideas in medieval medical recipe texts are extensive, multifarious, and thus not necessarily distinguishable effortlessly, if discernible at all, and scientific concepts and

Catherine Rider, "Medical Magic and the Church in 13th-Century England," *Social History of Medicine* 24 (2011): 92–107.

¹⁴ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 154r.

¹⁵ On categories of healers and the Occitan term *metge*, see Jacquart, *Le milieu médical en France* (see note 12), 32.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Thomas F. Glick, Steven J. Livesey, and Faith Wallis, *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 341.

¹⁷ The case of Berengier Pallada is studied in Niiranen, "The Authority of Words" (see note 2), 70.

¹⁸ Irma Taavitsainen, "Early English Scientific Writing: New Corpora, New Approaches," *Textual Healing. Studies in Medieval English Medical, Scientific and Technical Texts*, ed. Javier E. Díaz Vera and Rosario Caballero. Linguistic Insights, 101 (Bern, Brussels, Frankfurt a. M., et al.: Peter Lang, 2009), 177–206; here 182.

theories are often found in recipes as implicit ideas.¹⁹ Alternatively, or in addition, individual (Latin) terms and other markers of theoretical knowledge could have been added to give the text prestige and a learned air.²⁰ Consequently, as an eclectic source material medical recipe collections encompass various cultural aspects which are conventionally described by such pairs as high-low, professional-lay, learned-popular, written-oral.²¹ However, registers do overlap and the traditional borderline between ‘learned’ knowledge and ‘popular’ belief can also be revised by this material. Medical recipes are taken here as a genre with expectations of certain conventions in content, style, and structure, in the service of a consistent meaning in the practical use of different healers and readers.²²

The customary recipe style is as follows: for such-and-such an ailment, take these ingredients, prepare them and dispense them in this manner, and thus the ailment will be cured. Remedies were mainly so-called simple medicines, meaning a simple plant or a simple drug, rather than a compound drug made from several plants. The sources and models were known recipe collections, such as *Antidotarium Nicolai*²³ or *Liber de simplicibus medicina*.²⁴ In addition to plants, *simplicia* might involve animal ingredients and minerals as effective substances. Healing with plants, animal substances, and stones includes rules for picking and using herbs, concoctions, ligatures, suspensions, and dietary advice. Recipes we call

19 Päivi Pahta, Irma Taavitsainen, “Vernacularisation of Scientific and Medical Writing in Its Sociohistorical Context,” *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (see note 6), 1–22; here 12; Horden, “Early Medieval Medicine” (see note 5), 2011.

20 On the use of Latin in this text, see Niiranen, “The Authority of Words” (see note 2), 66.

21 On these concepts and their interaction, see, for example, Aaron J. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture. Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth. Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la maison des sciences de l’homme, 1988) [orig. published in Russian in 1981].

22 On how to define the recipe genre by form, function, and vocabulary, see Ruth Carroll, “Middle English Recipes: Vernacularisation of a Text-Type,” *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (see note 6), 174–91; here 186–89. On the differences between *medicamenta*, *antidotaria*, and *receptaria*, see Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine* (see note 6), 8.

23 There were also various vernacular versions of this remedy collection circulating, see, e.g., Paul Dorveaux, *L’antidotaire Nicolas*. Deux traductions françaises de l’Antidotarium Nicolai. L’une du XIV^e siècle suivie de quelques recettes de la même époque et d’un glossaire. L’autre du XV^e siècle incomplète. Publiées d’après les manuscrits français 25327 et 14827 de la Bibliothèque nationale Paris (Paris: H. Welter, 1896).

24 See, e.g., Ventura who states that the *Circa instans* was one of the most significant, used and diffused works of the Scuola Medica Salernitana, Ventura “Un manuale di farmacologia medievale ed i suoi lettori” (see note 9), 466.

magical today comprise short protective texts often termed charms,²⁵ spells, or incantations,²⁶ prognostications (how to know in advance if a sick person is dying or not,²⁷ and who will win the duel²⁸), even a few conjurations (against rabbits²⁹ and excessive menstrual bleeding³⁰), but also snippets of Christian prayers³¹ and parts of biblical or other sacred texts.³² Occasionally, but not necessarily, rituals are connected with the utilization of word magic. For example, fastening the belt around the woman in labor while saying the charm was assumed to help.³³

Previous studies on textual amulets have pointed out their ubiquitous nature in human history. The use of textual amulets has been widespread both chronologically and geographically. Their origin has been traced to Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures. Later amulets reflect elements from the religions of Egypt, the Graeco-Roman world, and the Judaeo-Christian tradition.³⁴ Since the early twentieth century scholars of anthropology and comparative religion have extensively

25 E.g., a widely-spread charm in Latin for giving or accelerating birth. In the recipe it is explained that the husband should take off his belt and tie it around the woman in labor saying: “Ego te cingo, Xpistus te solvat.” (literally: I tie you, Christ unties you). Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 143v; The charm is analyzed by Béatrice Delaurenti, *La Puissance des mots, `virtus verborum` : débats doctrinaux sur le pouvoir des incantations au Moyen Âge*. Histoire (Paris: Le Cerf, 2007), 12; see also, Irène Rosier-Catach, “Le pouvoir des mots : Remarques sur la notion de causalité naturelle,” *Revue de synthèse*, 129, 6e série, n°4 (2008): 611–16.

26 Incantations with vowels were plausibly meant to be sung or intoned instead of spoken in a normal speaking voice, which might be the case in a following recipe for fevers: “*A trastotas febres: Escrieu aiso en pargamin verge* [. . .]: + on lona onu oni one onu onus oni one onus [. . .].” (For all fevers. Write thus on virgin parchment and place on the altar beneath the chalice until three masses have been sung over it + *on lona onu oni one onu onus oni one onus* and then attach it to the patient’s neck). Trinity College Library, Ms. R. 14.30, fol. 146r.

27 E.g., Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.147v.

28 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 155r.

29 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.148v.

30 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.145v.

31 E.g., Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.155r. The *Pater Noster* was considered the most effective of prayers, because of its seven petitions that Christ had taught his disciples, but also because it could be recited from memory or written down as a spiritual shield against evil powers; see Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 91.

32 E.g., “Ego sum alpha et ω, primus et novi[s]simus, initium et finis. Dominus noster Jhesus Xpistus” (I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end), from the *The Book of Revelation*, e.g., verses 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13, Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.146r.

33 Delaurenti, *La Puissance des mots* (see note 25), 12.

34 On the Egyptian influence on Greco-Roman amulets, see Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets. Chiefly Graco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 1–2.

explored the ideas of magical powers in different cultures and found various forms which they integrated into groundbreaking theories of human culture, such as Robert Codrington's anthropological study on Melanesian folklore (1891)³⁵ as well as Henri Hubert's and Marcel Mauss's "Outline of a General Theory of Magic" (1904),³⁶ in which shifting borders of magic and religion were explored. Both studies were fascinated by the notion of *mana*, a spiritual power which can exist in places, objects (such as amulets) and persons often encompassing supernatural or other authoritative qualities. Their views were criticized for giving *mana* a far too universal dimension; the existence of *mana* cannot be denied and people do believe in it, but it should be observed in a more nuanced way. Mircea Eliade, for instance, approached the issue from a different angle giving attention to the importance of myths and rituals for a society.³⁷

Recently, extensive studies on medieval magic have only vaguely dealt with textual amulets.³⁸ Donald C. Skemer's *Binding Words* (2006) has truly filled a gap among scholars specialized in magic, those dedicated to charms³⁹ and also those dealing with the material culture of magic.⁴⁰ As he states, the study of the magical efficacy of words can provide access to medieval written culture, expanding our knowledge of popular access to the written word during a time when few people

35 Robert Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-Lore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1891).

36 Henri Hubert, Marcel Mauss, "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie" *L'Année sociologique* 7 (1902–1903), (Mémoires originaux, 1904): 1–146; here esp. 37–41.

37 Mircea Eliade, *Le sacré et la profane* (Paris: Gallimard 1965).

38 See, for instance, the seminal works of Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); *The Religion of Fools? Superstition Past and Present*, ed. Stephen Anthony Smith and Alan Knight. Past & Present, Supplement, 3 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

39 See, e.g., Lea T. Olsan, "Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice," *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003): 343–66; Edina Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques*. Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental, 86 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004); *The Power of Words*, ed. James Kapalo, Éva Pócs, and William Ryan (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), which provides a wide geographical and thematic range including also Eastern European traditions on charms.

40 Textual amulets are not likely to survive in archaeological contexts, but there are interesting burial items which are considered candidates for talismans; see Roberta Gilchrist, "Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials," *Medieval Archaeology* 52 (2008): 119–59; here 125.

could read at any level.⁴¹ In order to better understand the function of texts and textual amulets in medieval society, I will offer a short overview of textual culture within the Western European context in the Middle Ages in the following section.

Power of Words in Medieval Textual Culture

Although the role of books and texts in medieval culture is well-recognized in historical research, and although recent studies prove that literacy (in its various forms)⁴² was plausibly more widespread than earlier assumed, books were however relatively rare and expensive until the late Middle Ages. In the early Middle Ages, the major need for new books arose when a monastery was founded and had to be equipped with the necessary liturgical resources. From the twelfth century onwards, manuscript production increased considerably due to the existence of an expanding reading public. As more lay people learned how to read, commercial enterprises sprang up in urban areas and newly founded universities progressively trained more students in the service of the administration or Church, in teaching of the secular professions of law and medicine, and so texts became essential for various purposes.

Moreover, bibliophile interests among secular and religious persons occurred and books were produced for individuals as well as for institutions. Professional scribes of commercial lay ateliers responded to the emerging needs of consumers and book-sellers competing with the monastic *scriptoria*. Nevertheless, the bulk of medieval manuscripts was used primarily in the service of the Church, either for use in the liturgy, or for other religious ceremonies. The proximity of the written texts to the sacred as well as to the secular authorities obviously enhanced their larger credibility and authority.⁴³ Given the great demand for books in the middle of the fifteenth century, it is not surprising that the printing press spread rapidly

⁴¹ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 5.

⁴² On distinct but overlapping concepts of literacy, reading, and writing in the Middle Ages, see Charles F. Briggs, "Historiographical Essay: Literacy, Reading, and Writing in the Medieval West," *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): 397–420; Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 12; Franz H. Bäuml, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Speculum* 55.2 (1980): 237–65.

⁴³ On medieval conceptions of authority and on the relation between the word and the sacred, see Albrecht Classen, "Introduction: The Authority of the Written Word, the Sacred Object, and the Spoken Word: A Highly Contested Discourse in the Middle Ages. With a Focus on the Poet Wolfram von Eschenbach and the Mystic Hildegard von Bingen," *Authorities in the Middle Ages. Influence, Legitimacy, and Power in Medieval Society*, ed. Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola, and Tuija Ai-

in Europe. This is of course also due to the economic and socio-cultural development of late medieval society which created favorable intellectual and technological conditions, e.g., for the art of printing. Printing technology contributed to the amulet production insofar as a printer could produce several thousand practically identical amulets. Nonetheless, the immediate consequences of printing technology for the amulet production were minor, because of the increasingly negative attitudes toward magic, but also because of the difficulties in adding case-specific adjustments, usually made by hand.⁴⁴

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the period which is the temporal focus of this paper, the authoritative position of the written word was generally unquestioned. Even the learned elite, for whom texts and books were a commonplace, relates certain books to unambiguous authority. Therefore, individual texts and words carried the same respect their authors enjoyed. Medieval texts were valued not only as end products but as links in a chain of literary activity, elements of a process of textual transmission and regeneration associating the author and text with a collective textual past: primarily the Christian and the classical *auctores* taught in the Cathedral schools and later on in universities (*accessus ad auctores*). In this environment, authority is closely associated with authorship.⁴⁵

This respect for the text and its past authors might have been manifested in the act of reading. While Petrarch used Augustine's *Confessiones* for *sortes* (opening the book randomly to find a solution or to answer a question), we know that Augustine used the Bible in the same way.⁴⁶ These physical uses of texts reveal some of the cognitive and non-cognitive interplay between them and their medieval readers. Gestural practices toward the text, for example, touching or kissing the page, reading aloud, performative gestures, or immobility when reading, voicing or not voicing the text indicate norms of reading. Acceptable reading behavior was inherently dependent on the status and gender of the persons performing the gestures. Reading technologies were thus strongly related to the struggle for literate authority and textual power,⁴⁷ but it seems that also

nonen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 12 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 1–24.

⁴⁴ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 228.

⁴⁵ Classen, "Introduction. The Authority of the Written Word" (see note 43), 4.

⁴⁶ Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (1990; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 203.

⁴⁷ Mark Amsler, "Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 18 (2001): 83–110, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/essays_in_medieval_studies/v018/18.1amsler.pdf

less eminent people shared this respect for literary authorities as well as physical employment of texts as the functionalization of textual amulets shows. In these, texts, words, and letters have both spiritual and material function.

In the healing process, words kept their power when they were in the constant physical contact with the patient. Textual amulets could either be hung around the neck or worn on the body, on specific sites to heal specific ailments. Also, the amulet text could be contemplated, or read devotionally if the amulet wearer was literate enough.⁴⁸

Textual culture⁴⁹ in the Middle Ages has also been of interest to archaeologists⁵⁰ and especially to codicologists.⁵¹ An archeological and codicological perspective on writing and literary culture means that the historical sources, books, documents, and writings which have remained on objects, buildings, structures, and their fragments are primarily examined as material culture.⁵² It is self-evident that the historical interpretation of a text cannot be separated from an understanding of the manuscript tradition or other material premises (and the modern scholar's editorial choices),⁵³ but a more interdisciplinary approach might increase awareness of medieval text production, its transmission, use, and reception, as well as the ideological, epistemic, and empirical bases for these.

(last accessed on Oct. 24, 2013).

48 Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 134.

49 A textual community can be broadly defined as a (grammatical) mentality, as a foundation for models of textual and literary activity, which in turn produces textual communities, Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: Grammatica and Literary Theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15; see also William Robins, "Introduction," *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 3–11; here 3–5.

50 John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London: Duckworth, 2001).

51 Erik Kwakkel, Rosamond McKitterick, and Rodney M. Thomson, *Turning Over a New Leaf: Change and Development in the Medieval Manuscript* (Leiden and Boston: Leiden University Press, 2012).

52 On digitization of manuscripts and the application of new technologies to recover unreadable text and investigate material aspects of ancient and medieval manuscripts, see, e.g., the Archimedes Palimpsest Project, <<http://archimedespalimpsest.org/>>; *Kodikologie und Paläographie im digitalen Zeitalter 2 / Codicology and Palaeography in the Digital Age 2*, ed. Franz Fischer, Christiane Fritze, and Georg Vogeler, in collaboration with Bernhard Assmann, Malte Rehbein, and Patrick Sahle. *Schriften des Instituts für Dokumentologie und Editorik*, 3 (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2010). Electronic version: <http://kups.ub.uni-koeln.de/4337/> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2013).

53 The understanding that medieval texts both create and are created by their historical, intellectual, material, and social milieu is a common thread in understanding the concept of textual culture in many articles in William Robins, *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy* (see note 49). See also the final comments by Allison P. Coudert in her contribution to this volume.

Whatever might be the discipline, terminology associated with word magic is often nebulous. Words such as *amulet*, *charm*, *incantation*, *spell*, and *talisman* can connote a supernatural belief in particular objects, rituals, or written formulas. Etymologically, the word *amuletum* (Lat.) derives from the Arabic noun *hamalet*, meaning an object worn on the body, especially around the neck with its alleged power to protect its owner from danger, harm, or illness. The term is rarely used in medieval sources, but sufficiently often enough so that we can make some distinctions between amulets and talismans. Medieval talismans were most often made for a definite reason while an amulet could also be used for more generic purposes such as averting evil or attracting good luck. Moreover, talismans were more expensive, exclusive objects, characteristically engraved jewelry, gems, or metal plates that typically contained astrological symbols and images, rather than mere holy names or bits of sacred or magical texts. Talisman production thus required knowledge of astrology, lapidary arts and special magical learning of ancient or Near Eastern origin. Similarly to the term amulet, the word itself, *talisman*, comes from the Arabic language.⁵⁴

The word 'charm' is sometimes understood to mean textual amulet, but unlike amulets and talismans, charms are not necessarily objects. Charm (from the Latin *carmen*) can signify 'poem,' 'song,' or 'magic spell.' Charms (as well as spells and incantations) are able to be delivered by speaking, reciting, singing or chanting in metrical form. They also exist in written formulas and their origin is often in traditional, oral genre. Charms worked their remedy by means of words, occasionally with the support of herbs, objects and/or rituals. Their performance was private and the audience limited to the sick, injured (or deceased), or other person in need of help, such as love magic.⁵⁵ Charm, spell, and incantation are often difficult to separate from each other since they are all created by using words and each may take place during a ritual. Invoking Christian figures inevitably bring us to the delicate and problematic distinction between charms, blessings, invocations, and prayers.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 6; Hans Biedermann, *Handlexikon der magischen Künste von der Spätantike bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 482; Charles Burnett, "Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy Among the Seven Liberal Arts," id., *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds*. Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS557 (Aldershot: Ashgate 1996), 1–13. For gems and the lapidary sciences, see the contribution to this volume by Liliana Leopardi.

⁵⁵ Lea Olsan, "Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition," *Oral Tradition* 71 (1992): 116–42.

⁵⁶ On the medieval use of blessings and invocations in healing, especially in the regions north of the Alps, see Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen: Angewandte Psychotherapie im Mit-*

When verbal charms are written down in codices they could be used as textual amulets by being copied on a piece of parchment or paper and worn on the body. Correspondingly, amuletic texts in codices could be turned into verbal charms.⁵⁷

Medical Textual Amulets and Their Materials

As stated above, the collection of recipes studied here does not contain amulets in their material form, but advice how to produce them. We have no information on the compiler of the text, but the pocket size of the manuscript and its unfinished appearance suggest that the book was most probably made for active, practical use in healing or possibly also in studying.⁵⁸ It includes other medical writings: treatises written in Latin such as *Pomum ambre*, *Trotula de ornatu mulierum*, and *De secretis mulierum cum aliis* as well as several collections of recipes and charms in Latin, Occitan, and Langue d'oïl copied down by a different hand than the one recording our recipe collection.⁵⁹ We have no idea how the manuscript ended up in England, but it has been assumed that it was there already in the fourteenth century. Since the tenth or eleventh centuries, there was a special, vernacular healing culture in England known through the *Leechbooks* and the *Lacnunga*-collection, for instance. On the basis of dialectical remarks and some references in the text, we can assume that the Occitan recipe collection studied here was compiled around the region of Bouches-du-Rhône, possibly near or in the towns of Arles or Montpellier.⁶⁰

The collection consists of more than three hundred recipes mostly for medical and cosmetic use. They are addressed to human beings, only one is a veterinary recipe. In addition, a few instructions relate to domestic tasks. Less than twenty recipes directly handle mental health, such as mental instability, varying moods, melancholy, excessive sadness (or anger), insomnia, and nightmares. In addition,

telalter (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2011).

⁵⁷ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 8–9.

⁵⁸ Outi Merisalo, “Transition and Continuity in Medical Manuscripts (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries),” *Continuities and Disruptions between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Charles Burnett, Jacqueline Hamesse, and José Meirinhos. Warburg Institute, University of London, School of Advanced Study, 15–16 June, 2007 TEMA, 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 51–61; here 61; On different uses of medieval herbals in libraries, teaching and healing, etc., see Collins, *Medieval Herbals* (see note 9), 310.

⁵⁹ Meyer, “Recettes médicales en provençal” (see note 2), 287.

⁶⁰ Meyer, “Recettes médicales en provençal” (see note 2), 268 and 273; Corradini Bozzi, “Per l'edizione di opera mediche in occitanico e in catalano” (see note 2), 150.

a few recipes concern humoral aspects, and a small amount of various “diseases of the head,” such as headaches, dizziness, and incoherence, nowadays often considered as symptoms of a number of different head and neck conditions rather than diseases themselves. A couple of items touch upon drunkenness in the form of tips on how not to get too drunk when drinking wine. Other items are meant for dental diseases, dysentery, different kinds of fevers, gout, and earache. The rest concerns different wounds, pains in different places in the body, skin diseases, as well as internal diseases. Recipes related to menstruation and childbirth occur rather frequently. Gynecological and obstetric recipes were needed for women’s use but it has been shown that they were equally often read by men interested in human bodily functions and particularly procreation for professional reasons or simply out of human curiosity.⁶¹

Among the medical recipes there is also material on household practicalities such as advice on how to get rid of harmful insects or how to conserve wine and food, which has suggested a female audience. Concern with health as well as simple treatments in family circumstances are, after all, considered to be a women’s field in medieval society. Additionally, the amount of gynecological and reproductive prescriptions has led to the conclusion that medicinal recipe collections were aimed primarily at women householders.⁶² Nevertheless, many uncertainties concerning the intended audience remain, extending from the sex and status of the compilers, owners, and readers to the distinctions between the categories of healers.⁶³ There are, as is well known, references which link women and magic in the Middle Ages (for instance, the genre of *Secretis mulierum*), but a more distinct tendency to associate these two is established from the sixteenth century onwards when the rhetoric of witchcraft directed against *vetulae*, old women and to some extent against midwives, emerged.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Green, “Integrative Medicine” (see note 6), 1224.

⁶² See, e.g., James Weldon, “The Naples Manuscript and the Case for a Female Readership,” *Neophilologus* 93 (2009): 703–22; here 707; Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen’s Herbal Texts 1550–1650*. Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

⁶³ See Monica Green, “Women’s Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe,” *Signs (Working Together in the Middle Ages: Perspectives on Women’s Communities)* 14 (1989): 434–73, who convincingly argues that woman’s health was not only women’s business; see also Green, “Integrative Medicine” (see note 6), 1224–30. For the categories of practitioners, e.g., Jacquart, *Le milieu médical en France* (see note 12), and especially on female physicians and healers, 47–54; Plinio Prioreschi, *A History of Medicine V. Medieval Medicine* (Omaha, NE: Horatius Press, 2003), 526–36.

⁶⁴ Green, “Women’s Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe” (see note 63), 445–51; Kathryn Taglia, “Delivering a Christian Identity: Midwives in Northern French Synodal Leg-

The textual amulets in recipes can be divided into six groups associated with ailments they are concerned with. The largest group is the cures for fevers while the second category is associated with excessive menstrual bleeding. The third section deals with love magic, and the fourth excessive drinking and drunkenness. A couple of textual amulets are made against insomnia. Individual items concern various areas of human life: healing of varying moods, dizziness, excessive emotions, infertility, giving birth, and preventing robbery. These last-mentioned individual items include a textual amulet against insomnia, which is addressed explicitly to both men and women: “. . . And pose it on the [sleepless] man or woman . . . ”⁶⁵ Although insomnia has no other definition in medieval sources than wakefulness or difficulty in getting to sleep, there were less severe forms of insomnia than frenzy. Monks, in particular, were said to suffer from sleeplessness and other sleep disorders as a consequence of their duties and communal sleeping arrangements.⁶⁶ They were not the only ones to experience insomnia, as it was known among wealthy noblemen and their doctors.⁶⁷ Sleeplessness was taken seriously and various remedies were suggested to sufferers.

Medieval terminology described textual amulets as brief written texts or the materials upon which they were written, such as Latin *charta*.⁶⁸ It was important that the written texts were put on virgin parchment or paper (*pargamen verge* or *carta verge* in Occitan recipes) or some other blank surface so that the palimpsested or otherwise used surface would not affect or undermine the force of the magical words. When it is specifically stated that words, letters, or signs are to be written down, the material mentioned is most often parchment or paper, as in the following example.

isolation, c. 1200–1500,” *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler. York Studies in Medieval Theology, 3 (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 77–90. On gendered magic and evaluations of midwife-healer theory, see Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society. Finland and Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 175–80.

⁶⁵ “E li paus sobre aquest ome o sobre aquesta femena,” Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fols.155v–156r.

⁶⁶ Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London: New York Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 109.

⁶⁷ On the insomnia of late medieval wealthy people, often connected with melancholy, see, e.g., Timo Joutsivuo, “How to Get a Melancholy Marques to Sleep? (see note 2); Luisa Cogliati Arano, *Tacuinum sanitatis* (New York: George Braziller, 1976), 68.

⁶⁸ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 13.

“A febres a sanar. Escrieu aiso en carta verge e lia al col del febros: Stephanus. Portarius. Sanbucius. Diontius. Eugenius. Gesilius et Quiriatius.”⁶⁹

[For fever to cure. Write on blank paper and wrap around the neck of the patient: Stephanus. Portarius. Sanbucius. Diontius. Eugenius. Gesilius et Quiriatius].

“Wrap around the neck” refers to the customary habit of hanging the amulet around the neck. It is known that there were special metal capsules for this purpose as well as little sachets made of leather or textile, but the recipes do not mention any cases or containers.⁷⁰ The other common possibility was simply for a person needing the support of an amulet to carry a written text on the own body: “Si vols que om poderos te am. Escrieu aquestas letras en carta verge et pois porta las seems ab te ‘IxqRNCXaVque’” (If you want that a powerful man will like you. Write these letters in blank paper and then carry them with you ‘IxqRNCXaVque’). Similar recipes for men were also included. Or the piece containing healing words could be put directly on the sore spot, “sobrel cap del febros”⁷¹ (on the head of the fever patient) or under the head (or on the pillow?) of the insomniac.⁷²

Besides parchment and paper, other materials used for the production of amulets consist of natural ingredients: plant parts such as a bay leaf and even egg. The recipe with the bay leaf is for determining whether a sick person is going to die or not:

“Si vols saber sil malautes si mora o si vieura. Escrieu aquestas caractas en una foilla de laurier e pausa sobrel piez, e si parla, vieura d’aquel mal senes dupte; si non, mora ne: GbopooSD.”

[Write these letters on a bay leaf and place it on his feet, and if he speaks, he will live without doubt but if he does not speak, he will die of it: GbopooSD].

The issue is the same in an item which advises using a fresh egg and writing on it with “dyed” letters. However, the substances of the dyeing colors are not indicated. “Letters” or “writing” (termed *letras* in the recipe) also contain various signs, such as crosses, pointed crosses and other graphic signs. The results will

⁶⁹ Trinity College Library, Ms. R. 14.30, fol. 146r.

⁷⁰ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 156; on Jewish metal amulet cases with pictures, see Vuk Dautović, “Unknown Collection of Amulets from Belgrade,” *El Prezente: Studies in Sephardic Culture, Magic and Folk Medicine*, ed. Tamar Alexander, Yaakov Bentolila, Eliezer Papo. El Prezente, 5 (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Center Moshe David Gaon for Ladino Culture, 2011), 161–86; here 162–72.

⁷¹ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.146r.

⁷² Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fols.155v–156r.

be revealed by checking whether there is blood inside the egg. In that case, the disease is lethal.⁷³

A somewhat unusual material to create amulets was lead. Lead tablets were known in Roman magic where lead packages or tablets embodied malevolent spells or curses. In medieval contexts lead was consumed for beneficent, magico-medical procedures, for example lead squares termed *laminae* were believed to help women conceive, and to cure anthrax fistula (a type of ulcer or wound). In this regard, these lead amulets are close to talismans, which were often made for a definite reason, but instead of special magical learning they include short, apotropaic texts similar to textual amulets. In Scandinavia, lead rolls, tablets and crosses were used as Christian amulets, often folded to enclose the text of a prayer or other formula.⁷⁴ In the Occitan collection, there is only one textual amulet made of lead. Its described use as a tablet resembles the utilization of *lamina*:

“A curamen de sanc de las femenas que per natura lo perdo. Escrieu aquestas caractas ins en .i. tauleta que sia d'estang e lia la sobrel ventre: apoono.”⁷⁵

[For curing women's bleeding which they lose naturally. Write these letters on a small tablet made of lead and tie it on her abdomen apoono.]

Pieces of paper or parchment were not available to every person, even if only needed in a small size. It is probable that clerics could exploit, at least to a certain extent, some writing materials related to their profession. Blank space in a manuscript leaves material available that could serve as future textual amulets. This is visible in mutilated folio leaves that have lost small, rectangular pieces, probably used for amulet production.⁷⁶ These materials were replaced by cheaper and more easily available ones. Appropriate materials were found in the everyday environment. An interesting, rarely mentioned writing material is apple, carved with a sharp knife. Finally, the fever recipe advises giving it to the patient to eat with bread.⁷⁷ In this case, the amulet is thus not meant to be worn *on* the body, but *in* the body. The consumption of the textual amulet (carved apple) as food and/or medicine might reassert the power over the patient through ingestion.

Both lead and wax were used in commercially produced votive offerings of anatomical models which were left at the shrine in the hope of healing a particu-

⁷³ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.158r.

⁷⁴ Gilchrist, “Magic for the Dead?” (see note 40), 125.

⁷⁵ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 147r.

⁷⁶ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 76.

⁷⁷ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 145v.

lar limb, organ, or other body part. Wax tablets also served as writing devices for drafting literary texts and accounts, but they survive only in a small amount. Two Occitan recipes invite the reader to write amuletic texts on wax. In the recipe which predicts the winner of a duel winner, the wax has to be blessed. In another one, which is a longish entry against robbery written in Latin, it is said at the end that “quod oratio ista debet esse scripta super cera” (this discourse should be written on wax).⁷⁸

The substance of ink is not specified, unless it has to be blood. A recipe which belongs to the group of love magic or at least attempts to create a relationship (*amistanza*, literally “friendship”) advises to write the spell on blank parchment (*en pargamen verge*) in dove blood.⁷⁹ Oak galls, which are also called oak apples, have been used in the production of ink since at least from the time of the Roman Empire. Medieval scribes and copyists mainly used iron gall ink, which continued to be the principal medium for writing in the Western world until the early twentieth century.⁸⁰ No ink or recipe for ink, however, is mentioned.

Sacra verba

Protective assistance was also sought through sacred names. Divine and angelic names were used whether Christian, Hebrew, or Solomonic. Textual components related to Christ belong to the amulet inscriptions of the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries. Doubtlessly, the inspiration comes from the Gospels which portrayed Jesus as a healer. They also portray his disciples as healing the sick.⁸¹ The types of healings attributed to Jesus in the gospel traditions include at least fever, leprosy, bent back, blindness, deafness, paralysis, withered hand, hemorrhage, and exorcism. One of his fever patients was Simon Peter’s mother-in-law, who was ill with a high fever. Jesus rebuked the fever, took her by the hand, and lifted her up. The disease instantly left the woman. By the same evening everyone who had someone sick brought the person to Jesus. He healed all sorts of diseases and cast out several demons. Matthew reminds that these events fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 53:4).⁸²

⁷⁸ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.155r and fol. 161r.

⁷⁹ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fols.154v–55r.

⁸⁰ David Diringer, *The Book Before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), 551–52.

⁸¹ Acts 4:10, referring to the miracle in 3:1–16; cf. Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:13; Luke 9:1–2 and 10:17–20.

⁸² Matthew 8:14–18; Mark 1:29–34; Luke 4:38–41.

The sacred YHS monogram, standing for ‘Yhesus’ or ‘Yhesus hominum’ prescription for fever:

“A trastota febre. Escrieu aiso en carta verge e fai al febricitant .viiiij. dias sobre se portar : +JHS+JHS+JHS.SOTER.YNOS. ADONAI.O.”⁸³

[For all fever. Write this on blank paper and give to the fever patient who should carry it on him- or herself for nine days: +JHS+JHS+JHS.SOTER.YNOS. ADONAI.O]

In the same item, the use of crosses and the word *adonai* deserves attention. Christian symbols, such as crosses, were used from very early on as apotropaic powers. In extant amulets, handwritten crosses served plausibly as visual shorthand, showing the right time to make physical gestures, conduct rituals connected with the text.⁸⁴ The Lord in Hebrew, *adonai*, is one of the most potent divine names. Among frequently used names in Hebrew are Emmanuel, Messiah, Sabaoth, and Iao, which contained the most powerful elements of Jewish magic, but not in this collection.⁸⁵ Importance was also attached to the sacred numbers such as three and seven. In the following item, the Latin names apparently represent Christian figures: martyrs, saints and popes, although the orthography of proper names is rather original. For example, Gesilius probably refers to Pope Gelasius II, who stayed in Occitania in 1118–1119 and was buried in Cluny.⁸⁶

“A febres a sanar. Escrieu aiso en carta verge e lia al col del febrós: Stephanus. Portarius. Sanbucius. Diontius. Eugenius. Gesilius et Quiriatius.”⁸⁷

[For fever to cure. Write on blank paper and wrap around the neck of the patient: Stephanus. Portarius. Sanbucius. Diontius. Eugenius. Gesilius et Quiriatius.]

Their number is seven as it is in a known textual amulet against insomnia in which the seven sleepers of Ephesus (*Malcus, Maximianus, Marcianus, Johannes, Seraphion, Costantinus*, and *Dionisius*) are listed. In this context, the recipe is intended explicitly both for men and women: it was advised to place it either on

⁸³ Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol. 143v.

⁸⁴ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 94.

⁸⁵ Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 48, 112; Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition, a Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), 136. This seminal study has been reprinted in new editions many times, latest in 2004.

⁸⁶ On the vicissitudes of Gelasius II, see, e.g., Claudio Rendina, *I papi. Storia e segreti dalle biografie dei 264 romani pontefici rivivono retroscena e misteri della cattedra di Pietro tra antipapi, giubilee, conclavi e concili ecumenici* (Rome: Newton Compton, 2002), 406–07.

⁸⁷ Trinity College Library, Ms. R. 14.30, fol. 146r.

the sleepless man (*ome*) or woman (*femena*),⁸⁸ indicating that both sexes could suffer from insomnia. Besides recipes for menstruation and giving birth, the entry is unique in the manner it is addressed explicitly to both sexes. In these sources, insomnia has no other definition than wakefulness or difficulty in going to sleep. Insomnia recipes use word magic relatively often.

Frequently used were words uttered by Christ himself in the Bible, such as the Greek letters alpha and omega symbolizing his essence as the beginning and the end. The most common prayers in textual amulets are *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, and *Gloria Patri*. These formulas in Latin were clearly related to the prayers of mainstream liturgy. However, it is unclear when they began to appear in apotropaic texts.⁸⁹ Occasionally, Christian texts might be apocryphical such as the story about St. Peter and Christ at the gate of Galilee. The recipe is known from several versions as a fever charm.⁹⁰ In this collection, it appears in two variants, both in Latin⁹¹ and in vernacular.⁹²

Christian, apotropaic names and cryptic inscriptions were combined in certain items as in a recipe for a person who suffers from varying moods. According to the recipe, the written text hanging around the neck should include the following inscription: “Malignitatz te gadzaignet e nostre seiner Jhesu Crist te sanet, la verge madona sancta Maria te salvet m m a et vos”⁹³ (Will malignity leave you, Jesus Christ heal you, and the Virgin Saint Mary save you *m m a* and you). Mental ailments often invited the use of the amulet because of the medical tradition regarding such cases⁹⁴ and because of the fact that there were only few efficient therapies available for them, if any at all. What is more, the employment of three individual letters ‘m m a’ catches the attention. Connected with the pronoun ‘you,’ it seems that the letters stand for a name or the names of the patient/s. In that case, the entry would represent an example of a personalized textual amulet. Handwritten amulets could have been custom-produced one at a time with owner-specific references.⁹⁵

88 “E li paus sobre aquest ome o sobre aquesta femena” (And place it on the [sleepless] man or woman), Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fols.155v–156r.

89 Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 89–90; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites* (see note 38), 17.

90 Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 106.

91 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.144r.

92 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, fol.146r–146v.

93 Trinity College Library, Ms. R.14.30, 143v.

94 The early practitioners of Greek magical medicine believed that certain mental disorders could only be cured by charms and other forms of word therapy, Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 23.

95 Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 228.

The value of textual amulets is enhanced by the dignity of Latin and the power of liturgical words. The same effect can be sought by the use of cryptic formulas. In addition to natural languages such as Occitan and Latin, artificial or constructed languages are applied in recipe collections. The vernacular is switched to the cryptic or magic language especially in terms of textual amulets.

“A trastotas febres: Escrieu aiso en pargamin verge [. . .]: + on lona onu oni one onu onus oni one onus [. . .].”⁹⁶

[For all fevers. Write thus on virgin parchment and place on the altar beneath the chalice until three masses have been sung over it + *on lona onu oni one onu onus oni one onus* and then attach it to the patient’s neck].

The litany of magic words is reminiscent of some (pseudo-)Latin conjugation,⁹⁷ but there are many cases where the charms or textual amulets are in an incomprehensible form. The above-mentioned recipe with the cure of a lead tablet for a woman suffering from excessive menstrual bleeding tells to write the letters “apoono” on the tablet and tie it on her abdomen.⁹⁸ At the end of the recipe, there are some drawn figures, whose function might be magical or astrological. However, written astrological explanations are lacking, which might be a sign of a pseudo-learned compiler.⁹⁹

Cryptic formulae, or at least inscriptions which yield no obvious meaning to the reader, have been found in ancient amulets of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and Semitic origin. Their use of phonetic, alliterative, assonantal, and syllabic patterns have led scholars to believe that they were meant to be sung or intoned instead of spoken in a normal speaking voice. It is nevertheless possible that words that appear to us to be gibberish were derived from some foreign language. It can also be assumed that a large part of the magical language was neither expected nor intended to be understood. Furthermore, people without reading

⁹⁶ Trinity College Library, Ms. R. 14.30, fol. 146r.

⁹⁷ Pseudo-Latin and quasi-Latin are also known within the Old English texts; see Debby Banham, “Dun, Oxa, and Pliny the Great Physician: Attribution and Authority in Old English Medical Texts,” *Social History of Medicine* 24.1 (2011): 57–73; here 58.

⁹⁸ Trinity College Library, Ms. R. 14.30, fol. 147r.

⁹⁹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites* (see note 38), 9. See also, e.g., *De spermate*, where “magic” is related with “mathematic” and “astronomy,” line 646, Päivi Pahta, *Medieval Embryology in the Vernacular: The Case of De spermate*. Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, 53 (Helsinki: Société néophilologique, 1998), 253, and the definition of the word “magic” in the glossary, Pahta, *Medieval Embryology in the Vernacular*, 271.

and writing skills might tend to see written words as magical, even if no magic had been intended.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Herbs and their use play the major role in this type of healing, due to their prevalence and availability but also to the long tradition of pharmacological knowledge of herbal medicine. Long-known local plants such as aloe, basil, betony, mint, mustard, nettle, poppy, rue, sage, and vervain recur repeatedly in these Occitan recipes and were used as multipurpose medicines. Apart from certain spices (e.g., cinnamon, ginger, pepper, saffron) and semi-precious stones (e.g., amber, lapis lazuli), plants mentioned in this collection are not imported exotic and expensive items known in collections influenced by Arabic medicine, but mostly Mediterranean herbs growing in the natural environment, backyards or local herb gardens. While herbalism in the spirit of the *materia medica* tradition is tangible in this material, there are also other distinguishable underlying learned currents, such as humoral theory, even if no medical authorities are mentioned.

In the same vein as plants, the animal ingredients in recipes come largely from the household. Except for certain wild animals considered powerful in healing (e.g., a wolf's testicles for curing frigidity, the use of tortoise flesh in a bath for treating gout, and a blister-causing cantharides product against melancholy), most animal substances derived from domestic animals: chickens, goats, pigs, and horses. Additionally, ordinary foodstuffs, animal or vegetable, were consumed as medicine, both in diets, in various medicine admixtures, and even for external use. Herbs or other substances could be used as such but they were often mixed or diluted with other ingredients such as honey, vinegar, milk, meat, bread, fruit, vegetables, water, and wine and then used as balms, concoctions, ligatures, pills, potions, poultices, or unguents.

Only few references are made to apothecary products (*pliris*, *margariton*), which are mentioned in recipes that are longer and more complex than the remaining recipes: these are borrowed from known recipe collections which were

100 Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, and Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England*. Medieval Studies (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 71; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites* (see note 38), 65; Skemer, *Binding Words* (see note 3), 28; Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (see note 34), 186–88.

probably meant for professional spice and medicine sellers such as *pigmentarii*, *piperarii*, *speciarii*, or *apothecarii*.¹⁰¹

Among these healing methods, there were textual amulets scattered throughout the collection. They were thought to protect and heal, and to bring the wearer good fortune. Herbs, animal ingredients, stones, words, and rituals were often used as combinations of two or more methods. Just as the whole collection, amulets contain both learned conventions and popular beliefs. They typically employ holy names, sacred phrases, bits of Bible verse, or prayers, thus blurring the borderline between magic and religion. Since early Christianity, Church officials had condemned amulets as pagan, superstitious, and demonic. However, given that the clergy had supremacy in literacy during most of the Middle Ages, textual amulets were most probably produced by them. The collection makes no references to producers (only to one practitioner), which is little wonder because the practice was viewed as condemnable by the Church. On the other hand, the abundant use of Latin phrases, liturgical fragments, and (gestural) crosses points to the lesser clergy creating amulets for their parishioners. Since textual amulets were such a pervasive form of magic in the medieval period, it is not surprising that their application reflects aspects of the history of medieval magic generally.

Amulets were employed throughout the Middle Ages, as they had been in antiquity and even before. Protective inscriptions are known to have subsisted in the earliest literate cultures, so obviously in the most rudimentary sense textual amulets can be regarded as an inherent element of magic. Nonetheless, distinctions between magic and religion, sorcery and necromancy, white magic and black magic, or benevolent and demoniac magic did not bother producers and consumers at the level of quotidian practice.

The scope of recipes concerning health and mental health is restricted in that diseases with intermittent symptoms as well as self-correcting problems dominate. Various fevers and bleeding were the most obvious medical conditions for amulet use, but also transitional situations such as conception, birth, love, and death invited their use. Additionally, some mental disorders tended to be cured by textual amulets. Powerful words were composed both against dizziness and varying moods, and in insomnia cases.

The growth of lay literacy in the late Middle Ages led to an increase in production, as well as an upsurge in the audience for certain types of amulets. We do not know exactly who made use of amulets, but certain clues point to both men and women at various levels of society. Moreover, people probably not only wanted to

101 Eugène-Humbert Guitard, "Pharmacien contre apothicaire (XIVe–XIXe siècles)," *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* 56.195 (1968): 43–56.

carry amuletic texts with them, but also to read them and if they were unable to do this, short fragments from familiar contexts helped them. Writing gave physical permanence to words. Written words continued to exist longer than verbal charms and carried on acting constantly on one's behalf. Unsurprisingly, when written vernaculars established themselves, vernacular textual amulets began to be created more extensively. They were cheap and easy to produce, which further suggests that their use was not restricted to the literary elite. The instinct to seek protection was common to all regardless of sex, age, status or social group.

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“But what is to be said of a fool?” Intellectual Disability in Medieval Thought and Culture

On February 18th 1265 the English Crown granted a remarkable request for clemency. At a petition of Thomas de Ferrari made earlier that year, royal officials reexamined the circumstances surrounding the apparent murder of Augustine le Fevere of Manchester at the hands of William Pilche of Sonky. According to Thomas, the testimony of the coroner of Lancaster, and “other trustworthy persons,” William—a *fatuus*, or fool—had never intended to kill Augustine. Rather;

William was passing along the high road by night, when he was met by the said Augustine, in the disguise of a terrible monster, uttering groans and refusing to speak, though adjured in God’s name, on account of which the said William rushed upon him as a monster and killed him.¹

The Crown accepted this defense, and fully pardoned William. His name was not mentioned again in the records of the royal courts until his death in 1278, when his brother sued a woman named Emma for the right to a small dwelling and ten acres of land that William had held prior to his demise.²

Like those of most medieval inquisitions, the records relating to William’s case leave many questions unanswered: How did William, a so-called fool, have friends powerful enough to convince the Crown to reopen his case, or the economic resources necessary to mount a competent legal defense? Why was Augustine disguised as a monster? Did people in thirteenth century England actually believe in monsters? But perhaps the most interesting question William’s case raises is what exactly it meant to be a *fatuus*—or fool—in the Middle Ages. For William’s defense hinged on the claim that he was too ignorant to understand fully his actions at the time he attacked Augustine, however the fact that he continued

1 Great Britain and the Public Records Office, *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Records Office*, Henry III, vol. 5 (London: HMSO, 1891–1901), 407.

2 John William Robinson Parker and the City of London, *A Calendar of the Lancashire Assize Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Record Society for the Publication of Original Documents Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. 47 (London: The Record Society, 1904), 163.

to own and manage property between the time of his appeal and death, suggests that the term meant something quite different than it does today.³

This essay is concerned with exploring this question. Since the publication of Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, numerous articles and books have examined how insanity was constructed in the distant past. Far less, however, has been written about the history of intellectual disability. Exemplifying this, in 1996 Anne Digby and David Wright opened their excellent anthology of essays on the history of intellectual disability with the lament that, "the social marginality of people with learning disabilities has been mirrored by their academic marginality."⁴ Digby and Wright hoped that their work would increase interest in the topic, however a large number of the historians who study the history of intellectual disability today also contributed to their volume eighteen years ago.

This dearth of scholarly attention likely stems from the fact that we tend to see intellectual disability as a fact of nature rather than culture. For since physicians first began to associate intellectual disability with abnormalities in the brain's physical structure toward the end of the seventeenth century, it has been defined as a permanent, congenital disorder, rooted in the anatomy and physiology of the brain rather than the pathology of the mind.⁵ For instance, the seventeenth century anatomist Thomas Willis, one of the first medical thinkers to write systematically about intellectual impairment, asserted that it was caused by, "sometimes an excess of some manifest quality in the Brain, as chiefly of moisture and

3 Not only would William's condition have presumably prevented him from competently managing an estate, if it aligned with our understanding of intellectual disability, but English law also began to prohibit "natural fools" and idiots from possessing land around the time of William's appeal. I discuss these developments later in this essay, but for broader background on the development of English law pertaining to mental incompetence see Nigel Walker, *Crime and Insanity in England: The Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968) and Wendy Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill, Incompetent, and Disabled in Medieval England*, *Cursor Mundi*, 12 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2014).

4 David Wright and Anne Digby, "Introduction," *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities*, ed. David Wright and Anne Digby (New York: Routledge, 1996), 1–21; here 1.

5 A. N. Williams, "'Of Stupidity or Folly': Thomas Willis' Perspective on Mental Retardation," *Arch Dis Child* 87 (2002): 555–57. C.F. Goodey, "Foolishness in Early Modern Medicine and the Concept of Intellectual Disability," *Medical History* 48 (2004): 289–310. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Mental Disorders, Prepared by the Committee on Nomenclature and Statistics of the American Psychiatric Association* (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association Mental Hospital Service, 1952), 23–4. For more on the recent history of intellectual disability see, James W. Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Minded: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), and Stephen Murdoch, *IQ: A Smart History of a Failed Idea* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007).

cold, for which reason Children and aged Persons are often wont to be affected with a Dulness of the Senses: sometimes a texture too gross and earthy so that Spirits cannot easily irradiate it, or make Tracts for themselves.”⁶ Medical understandings of the brain’s workings have certainly advanced since Willis attributed cognition to the movement of “animal spirits” through its nerves, however there is an undeniable affinity between Willis’s view that stupidity must be the result of some defect within the brain, and the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual’s* description of intellectual disability as “a disorder onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social, and practical domains.”⁷

While this view of intellectual disability undeniably reflects medical reality—some people are born with intrinsic cognitive deficits, and these people have undoubtedly existed at all points in history—the idea that intellectual disability is both inborn and permanent has also discouraged viewing it as anything other than a trans-historical category. Thus, until relatively recently few books or articles questioned whether people we consider intellectually disabled today would have been in the past, and vice-versa. The work that has challenged this assumption on the other hand, largely asserts that the modern concept of intellectual disability only emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when intelligence and intellectual disability were first imagined as medical categories.⁸

By exploring what exactly it meant to be a fool or “idiot” in the Middle Ages, I intend to show that both of these views are in need of revision. Based on a survey of ancient and medieval medical and theological texts, I will first show that the modern concept of intellectual disability has not always existed in its current form. For although intellectual disability’s status as an inborn, organic condition seems to preclude studying it as a fact of culture as well as nature, medieval physicians, theologians, and philosophers did not identify intellectual impairment as a permanent, congenital disorder. Instead they presented different, and often contradictory ideas about what it meant to lack intelligence, most of which failed to distinguish intellectual impairment from more intermittent forms of mental disorder.

6 Williams, “Of Stupidity or Folly”: Thomas Willis’ Perspective on Mental Retardation” (see note 5); 557.

7 “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” 5th edition, last accessed on March 3, 2014, <http://www.dsm5.org/ProposedRevisions/Pages/proposedrevision.aspx?rid=384#>. I cannot access it

8 See for instance, C. F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and Intellectual Disability: The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2011).

Then, turning to developments that took place within English law during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, I will show that when a concept of permanent, congenital intellectual disability did begin to emerge in western thought, it did not extend from early modern physicians’ investigations of a transparent medical reality. Instead, law played a significant role in shaping how society thought about intellectual impairment prior to the rise of medical conceptions of disability. As a result, some of our earliest ideas about what intellectual disability entails, and by association, who constitutes a rational subject, carry with them the baggage of a strange and distant past.

Intelligence’s Absence in Medieval Medicine

Since we tend to think of intellectual disability as a medical category, it makes sense to begin our inquiry by examining how medieval medical writers and practitioners thought about, and proposed to treat cognitive impairment. Simply put, if intellectual disability is a trans-historical category, we should find descriptions of its physical manifestations in medical writing produced at any point in history, and these descriptions should look fairly similar to our own. As alluded to, however, physicians did not begin to construe intellectual disability as a permanent, congenital, organic disorder until the seventeenth century. Accordingly, no disorder resembling the modern concept of intellectual disability existed in the medieval medical tradition.

I use the term “medical tradition” here to refer to a set of canonical texts and ideas that informed medieval understandings of the body and its ailments, but this should not obscure the fact that an immense variety of beliefs and practices that fell under the umbrella of “medicine” during the Middle Ages. Medical knowledge was not a self-contained discourse in the Latin West, but a fluid category, encompassing a syncretic blend of religious belief, folk practices, and transmitted Greco-Roman medical theories. Its practitioners constituted an equally diverse group, whose ranks included itinerant healers, barber surgeons, midwives and women trained in herbal lore, and elite clerical writers, educated first in monasteries and cathedral schools, and later in universities.⁹ Yet nowhere in the writings of practitioners at any level of society—surgical manuals, herbals, medical compendiums and commentaries, and “encyclopedias of universal knowledge”—

⁹ Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3–19. Also see Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 59–82.

does one find discussion of any disorder resembling intellectual disability as we think of it today. For, although ancient and medieval medical authorities wrote prolifically about insanity, melancholy, and other forms of mental disorder, none of the conditions they described were congenital or incurable.

For instance, Gilbertus Anglicus (ca. 1180–ca. 1250), an influential figure in the English medical tradition, described the causes of and cures for headache, migraine, vertigo, frenzy, mania, melancholia, lethargy, epilepsy, and apoplexy in his *Compendium Medicinae*, but omitted discussion of congenital intellectual impairment.¹⁰ Bartholomeus Anglicus (ca. 1203–1272), the author *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, a popular “encyclopedia of universal knowledge” also identified frenzy, amentia, mania, melancholia, stupor, and lethargy, as the primary conditions that could afflict the mind and brain, but like Gilbertus, failed to mention any disorder that aligned with modern understandings of intellectual disability.¹¹ Likewise, around the turn of the fourteenth century, John Mirfield (d. 1407), an English monk educated at Oxford, described more than twenty distinct mental disorders in his *Breviarium Bartholomei*, a massive medical compendium written to summarize established medical knowledge for monastic practitioners without access to a complete library of texts. Yet none were congenital or permanent.¹² These are but a few examples, however they are representative of medical writing produced during the high and late Middle Ages. Indeed, since Mirfield wrote the *Breviarium Bartholomei* to acquaint less learned medical practitioners with the ideas of established medical authorities, its contents offers us a rough idea of the sources that would have been available to a university educated physician at the end of the fourteenth century.¹³

One might assume that medieval medical writers failed to discuss intellectual disability in their writing because they saw all mental disorder as an ailment of the soul, requiring the counsel of a priest, rather than a physician. Yet, evinced by the conditions described in Mirfield’s, Bartholomeus Anglicus’s, and Gil-

10 Faye Getz, *Healing and Society in Medieval England: A Middle English Translation of the Pharmaceutical Writings of Gilbertus Anglicus* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 16.

11 Maurice Charles Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus’ Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 148.

12 John Mirfield, *Breviarium Bartholomei*, Oxford, Pembroke College, MS 2. For a brief biography of Mirfield, see Faye Getz, “Mirfield, John (d. 1407),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed October 18, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/18817>

13 Keir Waddington, *Medical Education at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, 1123 – 1995* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2003), 14. Mirfield received his medical education at Pembroke College, University of Oxford.

bertus Anglicus's writing, pre-modern physicians were quite interested in other forms of mental disorder. Indeed, medieval medical compendiums typically included a chapter devoted to cataloging and describing the various illnesses that could afflict the mind, and often provided vivid accounts of their symptoms. For instance, an early adaptation of Gerard of Cremona's translation of Avicenna's *Canon* identified the symptoms of melancholy as follows;

For certain bodies fear that the sky will fall on them, and others fear that the earth may devour them. Others fear robbers. Others fear lest a wolf approach them. [...] They imagine themselves made kings or wolves or demons or birds or artificial instruments. Further, there are certain kinds of melancholiacs who laugh whenever they imagine something that pleases or delights them, especially those whose melancholy is pure melancholy. There are certain ones who love death. Others abhor it. Melancholy's signs, which are in the brain, are especially an overflowing of thought and a constant melancholic anxiety, and a constant looking at only one thing, and at the earth.¹⁴

Subsequent readers of the *Canon* reworked this description to better correspond to the conditions that a Christian physician might encounter when treating the mad and melancholic. Bartholomeus Anglicus, for instance, added that the melancholics sometimes think, "the angel who holds the world is tiring or God is growing old."¹⁵ The English physician Bernard of Gordon (ca. 1260–1318) similarly opined that people suffering from melancholia sometimes believe "they are prophets, or inspired by the Holy Spirit, and begin to prophesize, and say many things about the future, or the state of the world, or the antichrist."¹⁶ However, they followed these descriptions with detailed lists of potential causes and cures for the disorder, which focused on the care of the body far more than that of the soul. Medieval medical writers then, did not ignore congenital intellectual impairment because they saw mental disorder as an incorporeal, spiritual condition. For while they often described the conditions they endeavored to treat in language that reflected their monastic backgrounds, they still viewed mental illness through a medical lens.

Instead, the reason they omitted congenital intellectual impairment from their writings can be traced back to the sources they relied upon for their understandings of the mind and the body. As noted, medieval medicine reflected a

14 "From Avicenna, 'On the Signs of Melancholy's Appearance'," *On Black Bile and Melancholy, from the Canon of Medicine* (ca. 1170–87)," *The Nature of Melancholy, from Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75.

15 Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things* (see note 11); 148.

16 Bernardus Gordonii, *Opus, Liliū Medicinæ Inscriptum, de morborum prope' omnium curatione, septem particulis distributum*, (Lyon: Apud Cuielmmum Rouillium, 1559), 205.

diverse array of practices and beliefs, drawn not only from a written tradition, but also from religious teaching, popular belief, and experiential knowledge. Nevertheless, as it pertained to its learned practitioners, the medieval medical tradition was primarily a textual tradition, in which the writings of authorities were copied, compiled, and occasionally supplemented with anecdotes and local knowledge. From the eleventh century onward, educated physicians in Western Europe received their ideas about the body and mind from abridged compilations of the works of Galen and Hippocrates, which reached the Latin West during the eleventh and twelfth centuries via Arabic translations. The most widely read were Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*, and Hunayn ibn Ishaq al-'Ibadi's *Isagoge Ionannitii ad Tegni Galeni* (or, the *Articella*, as it was later called), which western medical writers readily edited and adapted. Taken together, these works provided their medieval readers with many of the most readily recognized elements of pre-modern medicine; the theory of the four humors, the theory of the four temperaments, and the belief that the brain is divided from front to back into three ventricles, as well as a standard taxonomy of illnesses, their causes, and their cures.¹⁷

Contrary to the ghoulish images of trepanned skulls and involuntary exorcisms that color popular perceptions of premodern "psychiatry," medieval medical writers also inherited from these texts a surprisingly sophisticated framework for understanding mental disorder that endured through the sixteenth century. Galen did not draw a firm distinction between mental and physical disorders, because he believed that all diseases had natural causes, rooted in imbalances of the humors. Thus, he discussed mental disorder alongside other conditions affecting the brain, identifying phrenitis, mania, memory loss, melancholy, epilepsy, and senility as the primary disorders that could impede rational thought. His Arabic interpreters then expanded upon this list when writing their own treatises and compendiums.¹⁸ For instance, Book III, Treatise IV of the *Canon of Medicine* included discussions of lethargy, insomnia, delirium, deterioration of memory, deterioration of the imagination, various types of mania, paranoia, melancholia, "kotrob"—a "melancholy making men fancy themselves wolves and run off howling into the woods"—obsession, vertigo, nightmare, epilepsy,

¹⁷ Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (see note 9); 35–65, offers a comprehensive overview of the sources medieval medical writers drew upon when composing their own texts. For fuller coverage of Galen's reception in the Latin Middle Ages, see Vivian Nutton, "The Fortunes of Galen," *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 35–90.

¹⁸ Patricia A. Clark and M. Lynne Rose, "Psychiatric Disability in the Galenic Medical Matrix," *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity*, ed. Christian Laes, Chris Goodey, and Lynn Rose. *Disparate Bodies A Capite Ad Capitem* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 45–72; here 56.

cataplexy, and apoplexy, under the heading of "head diseases and their most adverse affects."

As we have seen, medical writers in the Latin West copied these taxonomies when writing their own compendiums, and adapted their descriptions of mental disorder to better resonate with the expectations of a Christian readership. As a result, most of these categories were widely recognized both within and outside the medical tradition by the High Middle Ages.¹⁹ Yet even as medieval physicians moved beyond their sources when describing the afflictions that could plague the otherwise rational mind, they continued to say almost nothing about minds that lacked reason from birth. This in part reflects a conservative aversion to innovation stemming from medieval medicine's status as a textual tradition. For it is one thing to add descriptions of angels or the antichrist to canonical sources' descriptions of recognized disorders, and another thing to invent new pathological categories.²⁰

Testifying to this, even when medieval physicians encountered irreversible cognitive impairments in the course of their treating the diseased and dying, they seem to have lacked a clinical vocabulary to describe them. For instance, in a section of the *Breviarium Bartholomei* devoted to the treatment of head wounds, John Mirfield recounted how his master at the hospital priory of Saint Bartholomew's Smithfield had healed a monk who had fallen "so heavily upon his head that straightaway he lost sensation and movement of his whole body."²¹ After detailing how his master had shaved and bound the monk's head, placed

19 Exemplifying this, the records of late medieval trials frequently used language that overlapped with that used in contemporary medical texts when describing the conditions of allegedly insane defendants. For instance, in 1277, the sheriff of Northumberland likewise described how he had determined that William de Erdeston killed himself, while "afflicted with an infirmity called frenesis." *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 2, no. 282.

20 Even when medical writers *did* stray from the taxonomies they found in their sources, they actively refrained from invention. Bernard of Gordon, for instance, seemingly departed from precedent when he listed false lethargy, restlessness, love sickness ("a solitary melancholy on account of love of a woman"), and demonic possession, among the diseases of the head in his *Lilium Medicinae*. In doing so however, was not creating new medical categories, as much as expanding upon those that already existed in his sources (lethargy, insomnia, melancholy, and mania). Likewise, John Mirfield discussed only two conditions in his writing—oblivion, and a sleep disorder referred to as *somnis terribilis sine de fantastica passione*—that had not been included in the *Canon* or the *Lilium Medicinae*. He noted that oblivion however was imply another term from lethargy, and the sleep disorder was nothing more than a specific form of insomnia—a condition discussed in other medical texts. Mirfield, *Breviarium Bartholomei*, Pembroke College MS 2 (see note 12). Bernardus Gordanii, *Lilium Medicinae* (see note 16); 140–251.

21 Mirfield, *Breviarium Bartholomei*, Oxford, Pembroke College, MS 2. f. 253 a, col. 1 (see note 12). I cite here the translation of Norman Moore, *The History of the Study of Medicine in the British Isles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 42–43.

him on a restricted diet of chicken broth and tea, and given him pills to “resolve by evacuation the material accumulated by the fall on his head,” Mirfield noted that the while the monk was restored to health, “he was never of such subtle cleverness or good memory as before.”²² Mirfield’s acknowledgement that the monk suffered from lasting problems with memory and cleverness following his fall, suggests that he recognized that cognitive impairments could not only be permanent, but also result from physical injuries to the brain. Yet the fact that he refrained from associating the impairments that afflicted him after his recovery with any of the hundreds of disorders outlined in the *Breviarium Bartholomei* indicates that Mirfield was describing a condition that did not align with any of the categories of sickness described in his sources or recognized by his contemporaries, and was not willing to invent new disorders to reflect this reality.

Even if medieval medical writers had been less hesitant to add to the taxonomies provided by canonical medical texts however, it is still unlikely that they would have had much to say about congenital intellectual impairment. For the same sources that that encouraged them to see madness, melancholy and other acquired mental disorders as ailments of the body rather than the soul, also contained a number of ideas about cognition and disease that would have precluded them from viewing congenital intellectual impairment as a valid object of medical inquiry.

The first of these relates to the way that Avicenna and his early translators presented the relationship between cognition and knowledge. Following Avicenna, medieval physicians and philosophers believed that the brain was divided from the front to the back into three cells, *phantasia*, *cogitatio*, and *memorativa*.²³ The foremost cell closest to the eyes contained the *imaginatio* and *sensus communis*, which were responsible for receiving and storing the information taken in by the senses. The middle cell contained the *imaginativa* and the *vis aestimativa*—the highest judging power. These two faculties were responsible for using the information presented by the *imaginatio* to make reasoned judgments about the world. As described by Aquinas, the *imaginativa* “combines and divides imaginary forms: as when from the imaginary form of gold, and the imaginary form of a mountain, we compose a golden mountain, which we have never seen.”²⁴ The

²² “Nunquam tamen fuit ita subtilis ingenii et bone memorie sicut prius.”

²³ An overview of medieval neuropsychology can be found in Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 60–73.

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, Second and Revised Edition*, 1920, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Online Edition Copyright © 2008 by

aestimativa then uses these forms to deduce general conclusions, and decide how to act.²⁵

Medieval commentators agreed that the middle cell of the brain was most closely connected to reason, and the *imaginativa* and *vis aestimativa* thus needed to function properly for a person to make and act upon rational judgments. Indeed, they tended to classify the disorders that impeded human reason as afflictions of the middle cell, exemplified by Bartholomeus Anglicus's assertion that melancholia was an "infection of the medial section of the cerebrum" which caused loss of reason.²⁶ However, medieval philosophers and medical practitioners were of different opinions about the middle cell's exact function. Some, including Thomas Aquinas, held that it was responsible for both reason and free choice.²⁷ In the *Canon of Medicine*, however, Avicenna had promoted the idea that while the middle cell could judge and combine information, a separate incorporeal faculty was responsible for our knowledge and ability to construct universal concepts from information we receive from external stimuli. For following Plato's suspicion of the material world, Avicenna believed that knowledge and understanding must be independent of the senses.²⁸ He thus proposed that humans acquired knowledge from a transcendent active intellect that resided outside the body, rather than from sense perception.²⁹ In other words, in Avicenna's assessment, human reason lacked a physical basis, a location in the body that physicians could attend to should cognition become impaired.

Medicine is a practical art concerned with material issues, so it is easy to imagine that this understanding of the cognition—if widely accepted—would

Kevin Knight, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/> (last accessed on March 3, 2014). First Part, Question 79.

²⁵ Ruth E. Harvey, *The Inward Wits* (London: Warburg Institute, 1975), 55.

²⁶ Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things* (see note 11); 350. Similarly, Bernard of Gordon explained that vertigo indirectly impacts judgment by corrupting sight. In his thinking, the dizziness that characterizes vertigo distorts vision, causing the optic nerve to send false impressions to the *sensus communis*. The *imaginativa* then uses these impressions come to inaccurate conclusions about the external world. Bernardus Gordanii, *Lilium Medicinae* (see note 16); 181

²⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Question 79.

²⁸ Alfred Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic Psychology and Philosophy of Mind," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/arabic-islamic-mind/> (last accessed on March 3, 2014). For a more accessible introduction to Avicenna's understanding of cognition see, Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 23–63.

²⁹ Contrary to this, Aquinas believed that a human was by definition a composite of soul and body. Aquinas addresses this at length in *Summa Theologica*, First Part of the Second Part, Question. 84, art. 1.

have limited how medieval physicians thought about the mind. For, if one accepts that human reason exists independently of the body, then contemplation of intelligence and intellectual impairment must be outside the scope of medicine. While Avicenna's influence on the medieval medical tradition cannot be overstated however, his psychological and epistemological theories had limited impact. Most physicians and philosophers in the Latin West did not fully embrace this aspect of his thought; indeed, the concept of a separate active intellect was condemned in Paris in 1270 and 1277.³⁰ Thus, this relatively obscure set of ideas is only part of the story of why medieval physicians did not write about intellectual disability. The rest extends from the fact that they understood disease and disorder differently than we do today.

We tend to think of the various disorders that can afflict the mind as distinct categories. When a psychiatrist diagnoses a child with ADHD, for instance, it is assumed that they will always have ADHD. They will not recover from it, nor will it progress into bipolar disorder, or any other disorders detailed in the DSM-V. Medieval medical writers, however, did not understand the various ailments they described as distinct conditions, but rather as fluid points on a progressive spectrum of health and sickness. *The Canon of Medicine*, the *Articella*, and the texts they informed placed all conditions that affected the mind and brain under the general umbrella of "sicknesses of the head," a category that encompassed disorders ranging from lethargy to frenzy, and medieval physicians replicated this in their own writing. These texts were careful to point out the different symptoms by which various disorders could be distinguished from each other. For instance, in *On Acute and Chronic Disease*, the Roman medical writer Caelius Aurelianus took care to note that mania and phrenitis differed in that "in mania the madness precedes fever . . . in phrenitis however, the fever always precedes the madness."³¹ Nevertheless, medieval medical writers maintained that the diseases they endeavored to treat were ultimately progressive; mania could develop into phrenitis, and phrenitis into lethargy, if left untreated.

This understanding of disease left no room for the distinction between intellectual impairment and insanity required for a concept of permanent, congenital intellectual disability. For if all diseases are progressive by nature, then they are also fluid, temporary, and potentially curable! This assumption was so strongly present in the medieval medical tradition that even conditions that impeded cognition were always construed as impermanent. Stupor, lethargy, and oblivion,

³⁰ Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition* (see note 28); 44.

³¹ Caelius Aurelianus, *On Acute and Chronic Diseases*, ed. Israel Edward Drabkin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 537.

overlapping disorders whose symptoms included impaired memory and mental sluggishness, resemble the modern concept of intellectual disability more than any other conditions in the medieval medical lexicon. During the high and late Middle Ages, medical writers the Latin West asserted that these nearly synonymous impairments deprived those afflicted with them of reason. Bartholomeus Anglicus, for instance, described stupor as "a blindness of reason, as if he who has it were asleep with their eyes closed."³² Yet they did not view stupor, lethargy, and oblivion as permanent conditions, or even associate them with the part of the brain that most closely connected to the human intellect. (For stupor, lethargy, and oblivion did not affect the middle cell of the brain, where the *aestimativa* was housed, but the posterior cell that contained the *memorativa*.) Instead, they held that they might be cured with the right treatment, or alternatively, progress into other more serious "sicknesses of the head" with the wrong one. Gilbertus Anglicus, for instance, noted that "if lethargy commeth to a frentike man, it is a token of death but if frenzy comes to him that hath lethargy it is a good token."³³

Medieval physicians in other words, were only concerned with ailments that could potentially be alleviated by medical treatment, and accordingly believed incurable conditions were best left to priests—the physicians of the soul.³⁴ Thus, even if they had understood the various disorders they described as discrete conditions, they would have still remained unconcerned with intellectual disability as we understand it today, because its status as congenital, permanent disorder implied that it was not a medical condition.

³² Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things* (see note 11); 350. Likewise, Gilbertus Anglicus, characterized lethargy as "a sickness that makes man so forgetful that when he does a thing he has no memory that he did it [and] makes men not answer when they are called, not close their mouths when they are open, [and] sleep deeply and heavily." Getz, *Healing and Society* (see note 10); 16. John Mirfeld described oblivion and lethargy as "passion [s] of the posterior cell of the brain causing a corruption of memory," and *stupor*, as "a sleep of the imagination." John Mirfield, *Sinonoma Bartholomei, a Glossary from a Fourteenth-Century Manuscript in the Library of Pembroke College, Oxford*, trans. John Lancaster Gough Mowat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), 41.

³³ Getz, *Healing and Society* (see note 10); 13.

³⁴ For a broader discussion of medieval physicians' attitudes toward incurable disorders and chronic diseases, see Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about Physical Impairment during the High Middle Ages, c. 1100–1400* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) 65–71.

Intelligence's Absence in Medieval Theology

We might now ask what medieval theologians had to say about intellectual impairment. Given that since Ancient Greece the western philosophical tradition has defined the human species by the maxim that man is a rational animal, it seems as if theologians and philosophers would have been concerned with understanding why some people seem to be born without the capacity for reason. However, like their medical counterparts, ancient and medieval theologians were remarkably silent on the topic of intellectual impairment. This is not to say that we do not find occasional references to intellectually impaired individuals in their writing. For instance, in 415 Augustine of Hippo wrote to Saint Jerome in search of an answer to a question that he claimed had long perplexed him: If man is the ultimate author of his own misfortune, why do some people seem to be born with less rational souls than others?

What shall I say, moreover, as to the diversity of talent in different souls, and especially the absolute privation of reason in some? This is, indeed, not apparent in the first stages of infancy, but being developed continuously from the beginning of life, it becomes manifest in children, of whom some are so slow and defective in memory that they cannot learn even the letters of the alphabet, and some commonly called idiots [*quos moriones vulgo vocant*] so imbecile [*fatuitatis*] that they differ very little from the beasts of the field.³⁵

Reading Augustine's description of children "so slow and defective in memory that they cannot learn the letters of the alphabet" it is hard not to infer that patristic theology contained the discourse about intellectual impairment that medieval medicine lacked. For Augustine's *moriones* and *fatuitatis* seem very similar to people whom we would consider intellectually disabled today, and other references to this class of individuals are scattered throughout his other writings.

For instance, Augustine also touched upon the issues raised by people "born with faculties akin to brute animals," in his *Treatise on Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins*, written three years before his letter to Saint Jerome.³⁶ Here, it is clear that he used the terms *moriones* and *fatuus* to refer to people with congenital intellectual impairments. For he noted that *moriones* were not simply, "slow in intellect,

³⁵ Augustine of Hippo, "A Treatise on the Origin of the Human Soul written to Jerome (415)," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series Volume I: The Confessions and Letters of Saint Augustine*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Cosimo Inc, 2007), 529.

³⁶ Augustine of Hippo, "A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Volume V, St. Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. and ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Cosimo Inc, 2007), 15–80; here 41.

for this is commonly said of others also, but so silly as to make a show of their fatuity for the amusement of clever people, with idiotic gestures." *Moriones* in other words were not just less intelligent than average, but people whose lack of intelligence placed them outside the spectrum of normal human types. Isidore of Seville echoed this distinction two hundred years later when defining the terms *stultus* and *fatuus* in Book X of the *Etymologies*. Here, Isidore noted that while people who might be described as *stultus* "are rather dull in spirit," they are not the same as fools (*fatuus*); for while the *stultus* had "dulled wits" the *fatuus* had no wits at all.³⁷

In these passages, Augustine and Isidore both acknowledge that some people lack not only reason, but the very capacity for it, and in doing so they differentiated between impermanent foolishness and congenital intellectual impairment in a way that pre-modern medical writers did not. Yet, these examples should not lead us to conclude that early Christian thinkers were greatly concerned with the issues raised by the fact that some people seem to be born with less rational minds than others. Instead, Augustine and Isidore were among only a very small number of Christian thinkers to write about people whom we might consider intellectually disabled prior to early modernity, and even they were not interested in intellectual impairment as an independent object of inquiry.

When Isidore outlined the differences between the meaning of *stultus* and *fatuus* in Book X of the *Etymologies*, he was merely clarifying terms that the Bible had left vaguely defined. Augustine's interest in intellectual impairment on the other hand, lay primarily in what it could reveal about the relationship between merit, intellect, and grace. Through his references to *moriones* and fools, Augustine sought to refute the Pelagian claim that people are awarded bodies "more or less gross" in regard to their merits or failures in a previous life. For despite their resemblance to "beasts of the field," Augustine believed that the existence of *moriones* actually demonstrated that seemingly innate faculties such as intelligence and bodily deformity had little relation to God's grace and favor. To illustrate this, in the *Treatise on Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins* he recalled the story of a so-called *moriones* who "had grace and merit beyond people of even the most acute intellect." For, while this man was "so patient to the degree of folly that he would allow any injury to himself," he was nevertheless so intolerant of insults to the Christian faith that he pelted anyone who blasphemed with stones.³⁸

37 *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof, and Muriel Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 228.

38 Augustine of Hippo, "A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins" (see note 36), 41.

Rather than elucidating anything about human intellectual variance, this story explains away its significance. For by using the example of the pious *moriones* to show that intellectual capacity has no bearing upon humans' ability to access the central truths of Christianity, Augustine implicitly suggested that *moriones* were not categorically different from people born with normal mental faculties, since both were equally dependent upon, and capable of receiving grace.³⁹ The *moriones* and fools we find in Augustine's writing then, should not be taken as evidence of an extensive discourse about intellectual impairment in patristic theology, for they were little more than stock characters devised to illustrate his theological points and refute those of his competitors.

Perhaps because the church fathers wrote so little about intellectual impairment, later Christian thinkers said next to nothing about the philosophical issues raised by people born seemingly bereft of reason until the mid-thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas expanded upon Augustine and Isidore's treatment of the subject in *Summa Theologica*.⁴⁰ In these discussions, Aquinas not only acknowledged that differences exist between intellectual impairment and the transitory foolishness, but also that some deprivations of natural reason are intrinsic to the body. For instance, when discussing whether folly is a sin, Aquinas contrasted *stultitia*, an impermanent folly acquired when one "plunges his senses into earthly things, whereby his sense is rendered incapable of perceiving divine things," to *amentia*, a folly that "arise[s] from a natural indisposition."⁴¹ Likewise, when identifying the proper recipients of baptism, he argued that "imbeciles and madmen" [*amentes et fuiriosi*] ought to be baptized despite the fact that they seem to lack reason, since even "imbeciles from birth" [*amentes nativitate*] differ from irrational animals because they only lack reason "through

39 This view aligns with claims Augustine makes elsewhere in his work, and is in many respects representative of his theological anthropology. When discussing "monstrous births" in *The City of God*, for instance, Augustine insisted that anyone who is born a man, is born with a rational soul: "But whosoever is anywhere born a man, that is, a rational, mortal animal . . . [E]ither these races are non-existent, or if existent, they are non-human, or, if human they are Adam's descendants and rational." (*City of God* 16:8; 1994a: 315). Originally cited in Amos Young, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 31.

40 Aquinas discussed human intellectual variance in four places in *Summa Theologica*; his discussion of predestination in ST I q. 23, a 7; his discussion of "mental blindness" and sin in ST II.II q.15 a.3, and his discussion of wisdom and folly in ST II.II q. 46, a. 1 & a. 3, and his discussion of baptism in ST III q. 68, a. 12.

41 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Second Part of the Second Part, Question 46. art. 2.

some impediment of a bodily organ."⁴² In this respect, Aquinas's understanding of the mind seems much more modern than that of medieval medical writers. For, there is an undeniable affinity between his understanding of *amentia*—as a congenital, incurable disorder, arising from a "natural indisposition"—and the modern concept of intellectual disability.

Yet, Aquinas's use of the word *amentes* also highlights the extent to which he and his contemporaries lacked an adequate vocabulary to describe this congenital intellectual impairment, just as John Mirfeld would when writing the *Breviarium Bartholomei*. The term *furore/furiosis*—which Aquinas used to describe people whose lack of reason stemmed from madness following an illness or injury—was widely used in thirteenth century legal texts to denote a violent and fleeting insanity. *Amentia*, on the other hand, was a term borrowed from the medieval medical lexicon. Yet, medieval physicians did not view *amentia* as a permanent condition, or associate it with congenital cognitive deficits. Instead, contemporary medical texts typically characterized it as a temporary, curable disorder, more related to madness than intellectual impairment. Illustrating this, in *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Bartholomeus Anglicus described *amentia* as, "the same as mania [. . . which is] an infection of the anterior section of the cerebrum, with loss of imagination, just as melancholy is an infection of the medial section of the cerebrum, with the loss of reason."⁴³ The Bible also frequently associated *amentia* with madness. For instance, the Vulgate version of *Deuteronomy* 28:28—"the lord strike thee with madness [*amentia*] and blindness and fury of the mind [*caecitate ac furore mentis*]"—used the term to denote a frantic, acquired, insanity.⁴⁴

Aquinas's decision to use this term to describe a condition that it did not correspond to in any other context then, is indicative of the fact that his interest in intellectual disability extended from his engagement with a textual tradition that held Augustine and Isidore's work in the same esteem that medieval physicians

⁴² Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Third Part, Question 68. art. 12. In response to the same question, he further noted that, "some [*amentes*] are so from birth, and have no lucid intervals, and show no signs of reason. But there are others [*furiosi*] who have fallen from a state of sanity into a state of insanity."

⁴³ Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things* (see note 11); 350.

⁴⁴ In fact, *amentia* did not acquire associations with intellectual impairment in medical thought until the mid eighteenth century, when the Scottish physician William Cullen defined it as "imbecility of the judging faculty with inability to perceive and remember," in his influential classification of diseases, *Synopsis Nosologiae Methodicae* (1769). German E. Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychotherapy since the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1996), 159.

held Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*, rather than a need to answer a pressing social question of his time.⁴⁵ For while people whom we would consider intellectually disabled can surely be found at all points in history, no broader discourse about intellectual impairment existed in thirteenth century theology, medical discourse, or popular culture. Thus, even though Aquinas and his contemporaries may have recognized that some people lack reason from birth, they had no way to describe their condition beyond classifying it as a more severe form of insanity.

Just as medical thinkers excluded intellectual disability from their discussions of mental disorder because they found no similar concept in the *Canon of Medicine*, Christian thinkers' relative lack of interest in intellectual impairment can possibly be traced back the Bible. The Bible provided medieval society with a template for thinking about disease and illness. Parables like that of the Good Samaritan presented a model for how Christians ought respond to the diseased and dying, and the New Testament accounts of Christ's miracles established a category of physical conditions that merited charitable attention if one wished to be Christ-like. As a result, the specific conditions that Christ healed in the New Testament—blindness, deafness, insanity, epilepsy, paralysis and other physical impairments, leprosy, and dropsy—held a special place in the church's social teachings.⁴⁶

When sermon writers urged their audiences to give charity to the poor, they frequently associated poverty with this set of impairments, and hospital and almshouse charters included specific provisions about the extent to which people afflicted with them ought to be aided.⁴⁷ Theologians also debated the extent to

⁴⁵ In most of his discussions of intellectual impairment, Aquinas referred to the passages from Augustine and Isidore's writings cited earlier. For instance, when responding to the question of whether folly is contrary to wisdom Aquinas cited the distinction Isidore had made between the meaning of the terms *fatuus* and *stultus* in *Etymologies* X, asserting that "folly [*stultitia*] is merely opposed to wisdom as its contrary, while fatuity [*fatuitate*] is opposed to it as its pure negation, since the fatuous man lacks the sense of judgment, while the fool has sense, though dulled, whereas the wise man has sense acute and penetrating." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Second Part of the Second Part, Question 46. art. 1.

⁴⁶ Paul A Fideler, *Social Welfare in Pre-industrial England: The Old Poor Law Tradition*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 8–36. For a more extensive discussion of how disability overlapped with deserving poverty in the minds of medieval elites, see Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁴⁷ For instance, the foundation charter of the hospital of St. John in Oxford stipulated that it should not admit "lepers, paralytics, people suffering from dropsy, mad people, those suffering from falling sickness, ulcers, or incurable diseases. Conversely, the *Book of the Foundation of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew's Smithfield* (1144) specified that the hospital should open its doors to

which this set of impairments ought to be understood as the result of sin, and these debates eventually informed the church's attitude toward medicine and its practitioners. Moreover, the conditions Christ healed in the New Testament were nearly identical to those that limited individual property rights in Roman law. While these two discourses developed independently of each other, it is easy to see how this overlap could have reinforced the idea that these disorders were somehow different from other afflictions of the body, perhaps creating what might be thought of as a discursive category of disability.

Intellectual disability was not included in this category however, because scripture did not contain any references to permanent, congenital intellectual impairment. In the New Testament accounts of his life, Christ never healed—or even encountered—people who lacked reason from birth. We likewise, find no people with intellectual disabilities amidst Moses's flock, the many descendants of the Patriarchs, or even the cautionary examples of Proverbs. Lacking a biblical template for guidance, medieval hospitals and almshouses made no specific provisions for the care of people with intellectual disabilities, and preachers said nothing about their plight when identifying the proper recipients of Christian charity.⁴⁸ Saint's lives and canonization records contain no accounts of people born without reason suddenly acquiring it, and theologians, as we have seen, rarely commented upon idiots and fools, content to focus on understanding the nature of human reason, while leaving aside the questions raised by its absence. Ultimately, while people with congenital intellectual impairments may have been counted among the insane for the purposes of charity and pastoral care, this only highlights the extent to which intellectual disability did not exist as an independent, coherent category during the Middle Ages.

This is not to say that scripture failed to provide its medieval readers with a sense of what foolishness entailed. For the Vulgate is replete with passages that speak of *stulti*, *fatui*, *idiotae*, *vir insipiens* or *insensis* and *ignari*. None of these conditions however are permanent or congenital. Rather both the Old and New

this same group, and recounted the miraculous recoveries they had experienced within its walls. Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 158. E. A. Webb, *The Records of St. Bartholomew's, West Smithfield*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 385–427.

48 Tim Stainton, "Medieval Charitable Institutions and Intellectual Impairment c.1066–1600." *Journal on Developmental Disabilities* 9 (2001): 19–30. Also see, Jonathan Andrews, "Begging the Question of Idiocy: the Definition and Socio-Cultural Meaning of Idiocy in Early Modern Britain: Part 1," *History of Psychiatry* 9 (1998): 65–95. Andrews argues here that asylum administrators and medical professionals only began to make special provisions for people with intellectual impairments in the seventeenth century.

Testament depict foolishness as a transitory state acquired when one doubts the word of God or turns from him by knowingly breaking his commandments. For instance, people who sin against God are identified as *stulte et insipiens* in Deuteronomy 32:6 in the Vulgate. Kings 13:13 identifies Saul as a fool (*stulte*) for having broken the commandments, and Psalms 13:1 asserts that “the fool (*stultus*) hath said in his heart: There is no God.” Psalms 91 similarly holds that “a senseless man (*vir insipiens*) will not know, nor a fool (*stultus*) understand the greatness of the works of God.”⁴⁹

From these passages, medieval Christians would have come away with a fairly coherent idea of what it meant to be a fool if they read their bibles with a critical eye, or closely listened to their priests’ sermons. Indeed, beyond suggesting that fools are those who turn from God, a number of passages in the Old Testament characterize foolishness as a condition that leads people to speak without thinking, trust too much in their own wisdom, and act immoderately, letting their passions override their reason. Proverbs 29:11 for example, asserts that “a fool (*stultus*) uttereth all his mind, while the wise man deferreth and keepeth it till afterwards.” Ecclesiastes 21:19 and 21:29 reinforce this sentiment, stating that “the talking of a fool (*fatui*) is like a burden in the way: but in the lips of the wise, grace shall be found,” and “the heart of fools (*fatuorum*) is in their mouth: and the mouth of wise men is in their heart.” Proverbs 12:16 gives the impression that these overly loquacious individuals have as much trouble constraining their emotions as their tongues, cautioning that, “a fool (*stultus*) immediately sheweth his anger, while the wise take injuries in stride”; and Proverbs 1:22 suggests that the root of all these problems stems from the fact that “fools (*stulti*) covet those things which are harmful to themselves,” and are thus unable to act in their own self interest. Turning to the New Testament, we learn that foolishness arises from intellectual vanity and hubris. Romans 1:22 for instance, derides people whom “professing themselves to be wise, they become fools (*stulti*).”

There is no reason to think that medieval Christians could not have attributed the traits ascribed to fools in the bible to the intellectually disabled as well. Yet, the fact that scripture depicted foolishness as an acquired condition meant that most people probably only made a connection between these biblical fools and people with congenital intellectual impairments long after the Middle Ages were over. Instead, throughout the Middle Ages sermon manuals and biblical commentaries portrayed foolishness as a negative character trait, habituated over time. Clerics followed I. Corinthians 3:18–19 and used the term *idiota* to describe here-

⁴⁹ For more on biblical depictions of foolishness, see Barbara Swain, *Fools and Folly During the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), particularly 10–26.

tics and people who challenged church authority, and medieval theologians continued to view the state of being an *idiot*, *fatuus*, or *stultus*, as a temporary and reversible ignorance, with no associations with a specific intelligence.⁵⁰

Intelligence's Absence in the Law

I have argued thus so far that medieval medical and religious discourses both contained assumptions that impeded their participants from viewing intellectual disability as a stable and distinctive disorder. Medieval physicians' conviction that they ought only to concern themselves with curable conditions prevented them from seeing congenital intellectual impairment as a valid object of medical inquiry. Their progressive understanding of disease and disorder also precluded them from drawing a firm division between intellectual impairment and insanity. Scripture's frequent references to acquired, transitory foolishness reinforced this view, and the dearth of intellectually disabled individuals in the New Testament accounts of Christ's miracles led medieval theologians to rarely consider the philosophical questions their existence raised, and exclude them from the church's social teachings.

If no category resembling the modern concept of intellectual disability existed in medieval medical or religious thought however, when and why did we begin to see intellectual impairment as a permanent, inborn disorder, rather than a vaguely defined form of insanity? Recent work on the history of intellectual disability asserts that this view only began to take hold during the Enlightenment, when medical thinkers and natural philosophers formulated a concept of normative intelligence that reflected a set of epistemological concerns about the nature of human reason, and new anatomical understandings of the brain.⁵¹ This

50 Mark D. Johnson, *The Evangelical Rhetoric of Ramon Llull: Lay Learning and Piety in the Christian West Around the Year 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8. It has been argued that English vernacular writers adhered to the scriptural understanding of foolishness as well. See, Lawrence M. Hopper, "Idiotae, Viri Apostoloci, 'Lunatick Lollares,' and Piers the Plowman," *"Songs of Rechelesness": Langland and the Franciscans*, ed. Lawrence M. Hopper (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 181–219.

51 See for instance, Goodey, *Intelligence and Intellectual Disability* (see note 8), 326; C. F. Goodey, "Blockheads, Roundheads, Pointyheads: Intellectual Disability and the Brain before Modern Medicine," *Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 41 (2005): 165–83; C. F. Goodey and Tim Stainton, "Intellectual Disability and the Myth of the Changeling Myth," *Journal of the Behavioral Sciences* 37 (2001): 223–40; Patrick McDonagh, *Idiocy: A Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 132. Tim Stainton and Patrick McDonagh, "Chasing Shadows: The His-

argument is grounded in the observation that no concept of intellectual disability seems to have existed in medicine, philosophy, or theology in earlier centuries, and in this respect, it is not unfounded. However, it also privileges the idea that the natural facts of the body are reimagined as disabilities primarily through the process of medicalization (an idea that negates the very possibility that disability could exist during the Middle Ages), and in doing so overlooks how reason's absence was imagined in a third, distinct discourse. For I would like to suggest that the modern concept of intellectual disability did not arise from physicians' inquiries into the workings of the brain, or philosophers' questions about the nature of rationality. Instead, its origins can be found in a meeting of legal theory and practice during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The law had long possessed the language for referring to intellectual impairment that medieval medicine and theology lacked. The *Twelve Tables* (351 B.C.E.), the earliest written laws of the Roman Republic had restricted the activities of two classes of mentally impaired individuals—*furiosi* and *prodigi*—and stipulated that they should be placed in the curatorship of their paternal relatives.⁵² Later Roman jurists would identify *furiosi* and *prodigi* as people who could not competently manage their own estates, respectively describing them as “who cannot make any transaction because [they] do not understand what [they] are doing,” and “who do not regard time or limit in [their] expenditures, but lavishes [their] property by dissipating and squandering it.”⁵³ This proscription ultimately became the basis for an expanded discussion of the laws of guardianship as they pertained to mental incompetence in Justinian's *Institutes*, part of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, the elementary textbook of the medieval law schools.⁵⁴

The *Institutes* specified that “*furiosi* and *prodigi*, along with the “persons who are of unsound mind, or who are deaf, mute, or subject to perpetual

torical Construction of Developmental Disability” *Journal on Developmental Disabilities* 9 (2001): ix–xvi; Tim Stainton, “Reason's Other: The Emergence of the Disabled Subject in the Northern Renaissance,” *Disability and Society* 19 (2004): 225–43; Jonathan Andrews, “Begging the Question of Idiocy”(see note 48).

52 Gershom Berkson, “Mental Disabilities in Western Civilization: From Ancient Rome to the Prerogativa Regis,” *Mental Retardation*, 444 (2006): 28–40. Also see, Margaret Trenchard Smith, “Insanity, Exculpation, and Disempowerment in Byzantine Law,” *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*, ed. Wendy Turner (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 39–56.

53 Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, vol. 43, pt. 2 (Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, 2004), 1953, 655, and 420.

54 *Justinian's Institutes*, ed. Paul Krueger, trans. Peter Burkes and Grant McLeod (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). The relevant discussion begins in Book I, 23.

maladies" required curators since the were unable to possess property, enter into contracts, make wills, testify in court, or generally manage their own affairs.⁵⁵ Beyond this, the *Institutes* noted that while the law of the *Twelve Tables* had recommended that *furiosi* and *prodigi* be entrusted to their paternal relatives, legal practice had evolved in such a way that curators were generally appointed for them "at Rome, by the prefect of the city or the praetor, in the provinces, by the *praesides*, after inquiry into the circumstances has been made."⁵⁶ In other words, the laws that comprised the *Institutes* removed the task of selecting guardians for the mentally impaired from their families' control, and placed decisions about their care in the hands of the state.

Following the decline of the Western Roman Empire, these rules gradually faded out of use as different kingdoms and localities developed their own customs for dealing with people unable to care for themselves.⁵⁷ For instance, in the late twelfth century, the English jurist Ranulph de Glanvill omitted consideration of people who lacked the mental capacity to manage their estates from his discussions of guardianship and wardship in the *Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Kingdom of England*, one of the earliest texts in the English common law tradition. Instead, the sections of the treatise that dealt with these issues took their cue from Western French and English custom and focused on questions about legal majority, outlining the ages at which people from various social classes could marry, inherit, and make contracts and wills.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, by the thirteenth century quite a number of English jurists and some practicing lawyers had read the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, and received its lessons in a form dictated by the standard glosses added in the Continental schools, following a revival of Roman Law during the eleventh century. While England adopted less of Roman law's rules and doctrines than most of Continental Europe, the laws relating to mental disorder and guardianship outlined in the *Institutes* profoundly reshaped how English law defined and responded to mental disorder during the later Middle Ages and beyond.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Book I, 24,3–4, and Book II, 10.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the *CIC*'s transmission during the Early Middle Ages see Charles Radding and Antonio Ciaralli, *The Corpus Iuris Civilis in the Middle Ages: Manuscript Transmission from the Sixth Century to the Juristic Revival* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 35–64. A less specialized discussion can also be found in James A. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession: Canonists, Civilians, and Courts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 56–61.

⁵⁸ Ranulph de Glanvill, *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, ed. and trans. G. D. G. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 82.

In the 1220's English jurists began to place limits on the rights of people deemed mentally impaired based on prescriptions they discovered in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. For instance, *De Legibus Consuetudinibus Angliae*, commonly attributed to the jurist Henry de Bracton, dictated that fools, idiots [*idiotae*], madmen, and “people without sense and reason . . . not far removed from brutes,” were unfit to inherit, acquire or alienate property, enter into contracts, stipulate on their own behalf or that of others, or be held culpable for any crime, since their lack of understanding deprived them of the ability to consent.⁵⁹ Since these restrictions had no precedent in English Law, it is clear that Roman law informed the Bracton author's choice to include idiocy and madness among the conditions that impeded the rights associated with legal majority.

Like his contemporaries, the Bracton author did not distinguish between “idiocy” and madness, however he did do one thing that was rather novel; he used the term *idiot* where the *Institutes* had used *prodigi*. This was a curious choice, since at the time Bracton was written the term *idiot* had no associations with intellectual impairment or mental incompetency. Instead, it was used to refer to people who were uneducated or ignorant, but not irreversibly so. The word “idiot” originally derives from the Greek *idiote*, which in its original context simply meant private or one's own. In antiquity, statesmen used *idiote* and its Latin derivative *idiot* to refer to people so inwardly focused and concerned with private affairs that they were unsuited for public life. Thus, “idiocy” originally signified something very different than it does today. Rather than suggesting an absence of intelligence, it instead described a particular set of negative character traits, much like the terms used to denote foolishness in the Bible.

The fact that the Bracton treatise used the term *idiot* in place of *prodigi* is thus somewhat ironic, since when Roman jurists included prodigals among the category of people unfit to manage their own affairs, the term *idiot* was nearly an antonym of *prodigi*; it referred to people excessively preoccupied with their own affairs, rather than oblivious to them. Nevertheless, in using *idiot* in place of *prodigi*, the author of the Bracton treatise and subsequent jurists fused the religious idea of someone in a state of ignorance with Roman law's concept of someone unable to manage their own financial affairs, ultimately creating an understanding of what it meant to be an idiot that would last far beyond the Middle Ages. In the 1220s, the Bracton treatise had simply followed the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* in locating idiocy among the set of conditions that limited one's ability to consent, and thus possess or alienate property. It

⁵⁹ Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England, trans. Samuel E. Thorne (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), vol. 2, 286; vol. 4, 292; vol. 4, 350–51; vol. 4, 309; vol. 2, 135.

had not however specified whether the limitations of idiots differed from those of people who suffered from other mental disorders, or described the Crown's rights over either class of individuals. During the last quarter of the thirteenth century however, English Law began to draw categorical and legal distinctions between *idiota*, *fatuus*, and people referred to as *non compos mentis*, or *furiosi*, on the grounds that idiocy was present at birth and permanent.⁶⁰

This is evident in legal treatises dating from this period. For instance, the *Prerogativa Regis*, a summary of the monarch's customary rights and privileges, asserted that the Crown had the right to take the lands of its mentally incompetent subjects into its hands, and appoint curators to manage their affairs. The Crown's rights over "natural fools" [*fatuorum naturalium*] however, differed from those over people suffering from other mental disorders. For since madness was a temporary condition, it could not permanently deprive those afflicted with it of their property. Instead, the *Prerogativa Regis* specified that when "anyone who previously had memory or understanding should become of unsound mind as certain people are through lucid intervals," the Crown had the responsibility to appoint a curator to ensure that their lands were protected for the duration of their illness. The Crown had no right however, to retain any profits from their estates.⁶¹ Natural fools on the other hand, could never enjoy the rights and responsibilities associated with legal adulthood because their lack of reason was permanent, and the Crown thus had the right to hold and profit from their lands for the duration of their lives.⁶²

The *Prerogativa Regis*, in other words, distinguished congenital or "natural" foolishness from other forms of mental incompetence on the grounds that the former was congenital and incurable, while the latter was temporary and marked by "lucid intervals." These limitations defined the English Crown's rights over its mentally incompetent subjects during the later Middle Ages, and they were reinforced and elaborated upon in subsequent legal treatises. For instance, in the 1290s, *Fleta* and *Britton* confirmed that the Crown had the right to profit from the land of idiots, and forcefully articulated the distinction between congenital idiocy and acquired mental disorder expressed in the *Prerogativa Regis*. *Fleta* noted that the king only had the right to profit from the lands of individuals who

⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion of English Law pertaining to mental incompetency, see Nigel Walker, *Crime and Insanity in England* (see note 3).

⁶¹ Alexander Luders, Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins, et. al., ed., *The Statutes of the Realm* (London: Record Commission, 1810–1822), vol. I, 226.

⁶² *Ibid.*

had been idiots or fools from birth [*a nativitate fuerint idiotae et stulti*], while lords retained their rights to the lands of people who had developed their conditions later in life.⁶³ Britton noted the same, stressing that the king's rights to the lands of idiots did not extend to "those who became insane through sickness."⁶⁴ The king, in other words could profit from the lands of people who lacked reason from birth, but could take nothing from those suffering from transitory mental illness.

Prior to these developments, theological and medical discourses lacked a concept of congenital intellectual disability, so in articulating this division jurists were doing something very novel; they were positing a conceptual and legal distinction between intellectual impairment and insanity which had not previously existed, and in doing so, creating a category of individuals who could be permanently deprived of rights because they were thought to lack the rational mind that characterizes the human species. We might ultimately infer from these texts then, that the distinction between idiocy and insanity that underlay the development of a concept of permanent, congenital, intellectual disability was at least initially a legal rather than medical construct, invented by thirteenth century jurists reading Roman Law, rather than learned from Galen and Hippocrates.

Indeed, in the last decades of the thirteenth century, people described as idiots and natural fools began to appear before the English royal courts, and by the end of the fourteenth century the Crown had taken hundreds of alleged idiots' lands into its custody. Hundreds of records documenting their inquisitions are held today in the British National Archives, and they have been used as sources for recent work on the broader history of mental disorder.⁶⁵ To say that this is where the modern concept of intellectual disability came from however would be a bit too straightforward. For the fact that the late medieval royal courts oversaw

⁶³ Fleta, B. 1, c. 11. a. 10. Cited in John Shapland Stock, *A Practical Treatise Concerning the Law of Non Compotes Mentis, or Persons of Unsound Mind* (London: Saunders and Benning, 1838), 81.

⁶⁴ Britton, Book III, Chapter II, a. 20.

⁶⁵ Most of the original documents are catalogued with the inquisitions post-mortem in C132–142 in the British National Archives, and have also been transcribed and translated in printed calendars (*The Calendar of Inquisitions Post-Mortem, Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, Close Rolls, and Patent Rolls*) compiled during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For other works that draw upon these records see, Wendy Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill* (see note 3), David Roffe and Christine Roffe, "Madness and Care in the Community: A Medieval Perspective" *British Medical Journal* (1995), 25–30; Richard Neugebauer, "Diagnosis, Guardianship, and Residential Care of the Mentally Ill in Medieval and Early Modern England," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 146 (1989): 1580–84.

cases involving people referred to as idiots and natural fools does not tell us what the participants in these cases took those terms to mean, how aware they were of the law, or even the extent to which the law as it was practiced reflected the law as it was written.⁶⁶ Moreover, since the legal idea of idiocy initially had little relation to the ideas about intelligence's absence that existed in contemporary medical or religious thought, the law's newfound distinction between idiocy and insanity was slow to catch on.

We have already seen evidence of this in the 1265 case of William Pilche of Sonky. For although William was identified as an *fatuus*, he was allowed to keep his land after his run-in with the law, and nothing in the records of his trial suggest that the officials overseeing his case took the term *fatuus* to mean what it did in contemporary legal writing. Instead, the fact that the Crown pardoned William on the grounds that he only killed Augustine because he mistook him for a monster suggests that even as legal scholars were developing a category of idiocy or foolishness based on the proscriptions they discovered in Roman Law, the officials charged with overseeing the earliest inquisitions involving *idiotia* and *fatuus* may have still relied on older popular understandings of the terms to guide their inquiries. William's initial entanglement with the law began slightly before legal scholars codified the Crown's rights over its mentally incompetent subjects. Thus, it is plausible that the officials overseeing his case used the term *fatuus* to refer to a general state of unknowing—as it was used in scripture—simply because it had not yet acquired associations with congenital mental impairment.

Yet, even decades after a distinction between idiocy and insanity had appeared in written law, many of the people who participated in idiocy inquisitions seem to have remained unaware of these developments, and continued to treat idiocy as a vaguely defined form of insanity rather than a distinct disorder with a different set of legal implications. For instance, the records of inquisitions held shortly after people identified as idiots and natural fools began to appear in court frequently use the terms for idiocy and transitory mental disorders interchangeably, noting that an individual was both insane and an idiot, or that they

⁶⁶ Along these lines, when other scholars have asserted that a concept of intellectual disability did not exist until early modernity, it is not because they are unaware of medieval law's distinction between insanity and idiocy, or the numerous idiots in the records of the English royal courts. Instead it is because they believe that the distinction between idiocy and insanity devised by thirteenth century legal scholars had little bearing on juridical practice. C.F. Goodey for instance has claimed that the distinction between idiocy and insanity articulated in the *Prerogativa Regis*, "does not seem to have been a legal enactment," as "the law had no standard writs of idiocy, much less separate ones for idiocy and lunacy before Henry VIII set up the court of wards." C. F. Goodey, *Intelligence and Intellectual Disability* (see note 8), 141–42.

had “become an idiot” after an initial bout of insanity. In 1286 for example, a writ described Peter de Seyvill as both *freneticus* and an *idiot*, despite the fact that contemporary medical practitioners identified frenzy as a violent and temporary insanity.⁶⁷ In 1316, the escheator beyond Trent claimed that Joan de la Chaumbre had appeared to be “an idiot and a mad woman” when he examined her.⁶⁸ Likewise, in 1278, the king’s steward found that Margery de Anlauby had become insane when she “fell ill a fortnight before the Purification last and is so infirm she is not of sound mind.”⁶⁹ Yet an inquisition held in 1288 noted that she was not insane, but had been an idiot continuously since the death of her husband ten years prior.⁷⁰

These descriptions are at odds with the idea of idiocy as a congenital, permanent disorder, and seem to reflect an understanding of mental disorder akin to contemporary physicians’ fluid and progressive view of disease. Along these same lines, many people identified as idiots during the early fourteenth century had like Margery, acquired their condition later in life, following a sickness or traumatic life event. In 1290 for instance, royal officials determined that Bartholomew de Sakeville had become an idiot, “from his eighteenth year when he fell into an acute fever.”⁷¹ Similarly, in 1332, the escheator of Northumberland reported that Robert de Corbrigge had been “of sound mind and memory” when he left home to study at Oxford, but had become an idiot when he returned only one year after that, proving that higher education has always had its critics!⁷² More alleged idiots than not also had spouses and children. Margery de Anlauby’s condition for instance, only became manifest after the death of her husband, and a writ related to Peter, the *freneticus idiota*’s case, required that his guardian make sure his “wife and children be maintained” out of the annual profits of his estate.⁷³

67 Great Britain and the Public Records Office, *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office* (London: HMSO, 1904–1970), vol. 2, no. 611, 373. For instance, in 1283 the courts pardoned Roger de Ekkeles for killing Catherine Skut after finding that he was “a lunatic and liable to frenzy, and killed Catherine in such a frenzy.” *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office* (see note 1); Edw. I, vol. 2, no. 88; It issued a similar pardon to Bertinus de Ughtredsate for rescuing Robert Bates of Dundra, a murderer awaiting execution, from the Carlisle gaol, since he had been in a “state of lunatic frenzy” when he committed the rescue.

68 Great Britain and the Public Records Office, *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227–1485* (London: HMSO, 1892–1954), Edw. II, vol. 2, 373.

69 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 2, no. 333.

70 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 2, no. 728.

71 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 5, no. 149.

72 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 7, no. 491.

73 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol. 2, no. 611.

What these discrepancies suggest is that the law's distinction between idiocy and insanity did not arise organically from popular understandings of intelligence's absence. Instead, the legal concept of idiocy was initially an invention of a learned elite, imposed on the public from the top down during a period of expanding royal authority. Had this situation remained unchanged, we might assume that the idea of idiocy developed by medieval jurists would have had little impact on how people outside of legal circles thought intelligence and its absence; however this is not where the story of idiocy in the Middle Ages ends. For, even if people outside legal circles did not intuitively view idiocy as a distinct disorder, as the Crown began to exercise its right to profit from idiots' estates, people with an interest alleged idiots' lands quickly began to see idiocy and insanity as separate categories.

We can see traces of this awareness even in inquisitions held during the thirteenth century. For instance, after Bartholomew de Sakeville was found to be an idiot in 1290, the Crown granted his wardship—including the right to the profits of his estate—to someone outside his immediate family.⁷⁴ Not wishing his lands to leave their control, his brothers appealed the court's findings, arguing that Bartholomew had not become an idiot after sickness as claimed, "but had been rendered *insane* from a blow to the head."⁷⁵ Although the records related to Bartholomew's case do not state this explicitly, his brothers undoubtedly sought to have him declared insane because the king's right to profit from the lands of his mentally incompetent subjects only extended to idiots.

Bartholomew's brothers may not have had a clear understanding what idiocy entailed, however they were able to recognize that their family's fortunes would be significantly less impacted if the courts found that Bartholomew was insane rather than an idiot. They accordingly crafted their descriptions of his condition to promote this ruling, an act that required embracing the law's division between idiocy and insanity. Bartholomew's case was fairly unique for its time, as the vast majority of idiocy inquisitions held during the late thirteenth century went uncontested since the Crown typically left both idiots and the insane in the care of their families.⁷⁶ However, as the fourteenth century

⁷⁴ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edw. 1, vol. 2, 361.

⁷⁵ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edw. 1, vol. 2, 446.

⁷⁶ David Roffe and Christine Roffe, "Madness and Care in the Community" (see note 65); 25–30 Roffe and Roffe argue that the Crown continued to entrust idiots to their family's care for the duration of the Middle Ages. However records of idiocy inquisitions held during the second half of the fourteenth century indicate that the Crown began to rely on the customs that governed a robust pre-existing wardship market when selecting guardians for idiots and their land as the century progressed. As a result, it began to treat the wardships as a saleable commodity. For

progressed, the strategies Bartholomew's brothers employed to retain their access to his land became more widespread. For in a century characterized by social upheaval, members of England's land-holding elite came to see accusing their relatives of idiocy as a way to circumvent the otherwise rigid rules of medieval inheritance when demographic crises caused land to pass to people other than heirs intended. As this realization took hold, people with an interest in ensuring that alleged idiots' lands remained in their control frequently contested the findings of the Crown's inquisitions by arguing that their relatives, friends, spouses, and tenants were not idiots from birth but insane, since they had acquired their condition later in life rather than at birth, and enjoyed lucid intervals.

For instance, in a representative inquisition held in 1345, John atte Berton attempted to regain control of his lands after a previous inquisition determined that he was "an idiot so that he is not sufficient to rule himself or his lands from his nativity."⁷⁷ John argued however, that, "he was of sound mind and was so before the taking of the inquisition," but;

By great grief and terror at the death of his father [. . .] ha[d] lost much of his memory and has remained almost without memory for three years, although he enjoys certain lucid intervals, so that he was reputed an idiot at that time, but afterwards he regained his health and has preserved a good memory for more than the last five years and is at present of sound mind and not an idiot.⁷⁸

The fact that John emphasized that his condition was acquired later in life, and that he enjoyed lucid intervals even during it, suggests familiarity with the law's criteria for distinguishing between idiocy and insanity. Similarly, in 1375 people with an interest in Margery de Layburn's land argued that she was not an idiot because she enjoyed lucid intervals.⁷⁹ Employing a different strategy, in 1373 parties acting on behalf Roger Stanlak argued that he could not be "an idiot from birth", because he had gone to school before he left home at the age of fifteen, and had learned to read.⁸⁰ Thomas de Grenestede was also found to be "of good memory" after being accused of idiocy, when he demonstrated that he could

details on medieval wardship, see Noel James Menuge, *Medieval English Wardship in Romance and Law* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 1–9; and Scott Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardships and Marriages in English Society and Politics, 1217–1327* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁷⁷ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edw. III, vol. 10, 44.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edw. III, vol. 16, 150–51.

⁸⁰ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 13, no. 296.

"count money and measuring cloth."⁸¹ In other words, people with a stake in the outcomes of later idiocy inquisitions recognized that the Crown defined idiocy as a congenital and permanent condition and used this fact to their advantage.

When considering these complex and fiercely argued legal disputes, one is struck by how far removed the idea of idiocy that prevailed in the fourteenth century courts had become from older medical and theological understandings of foolishness. Idiocy was no longer an ill-defined form of insanity, a general sense of ignorance, or an acquired moral disorder. Instead it was a congenital, permanent condition, characterized by a specific set of deficits. Rather than reflecting the religious model of foolishness in other words, the legal model of idiocy evolved so that it was completely incompatible with it.

Conclusion

The modern concept of intellectual disability ultimately reflects a union of medical, legal, philosophical, and theological attitudes about rationality and personhood, which emerged at different points in its history. Many of these attitudes undoubtedly did not originate in the law, but in parallel discourses about human reason in early modern medicine and philosophy, as other scholars have argued. Yet, intellectual disability does not have a purely medical history, any more than it is a trans-historical category. For, the division between intellectual impairment and insanity required for a concept of permanent intellectual disability did not originate in physicians' investigations of the mysteries of the human brain, or philosophers erudite questions about how we acquire knowledge; instead, people first began to see intellectual impairment as a permanent, congenital disorder primarily because new laws compelled them to. The conceptual history of intellectual disability thus began in the medieval courtroom rather than the physician's chambers, and in this respect comes from a stranger place than we currently imagine.

81 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol. 7, no. 284.

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Body and Spirit: Martial Practices Among Monastic Orders

Were martial arts (with or without weapons) practiced in medieval monasteries, and if so, were they a necessity, a form of physical relief, or an integral component of spiritual exercises? This question, although unusual, finds a good fit in a volume dedicated to both mental health and spirituality. It is also not as odd at it may seem, as it rests on a small but sufficient body of primary information that confirms the existence of such unexpected monastic activity within both Buddhist and Christian cultures. How to interpret its purpose, however, is far from a simple task. For starters, a cultural bias against this topic has inhibited modern cross-cultural research, and with it both a stimulating scholarly dialogue and the tapping of new sources. Mikael Adolphson, in his monograph on Japanese warrior monks, summarizes the situation concisely:

Where the military exploits and martial prowess of secular warriors are seen as valuable topics worthy of scholarly inquiry, monastic forces have been all but ignored, and where they have been treated, they have frequently been looked down upon . . . The general neglect of such accounts is in part grounded in the modern notion that religion and politics are and should be distinctively separate entities and that any influence on political and military matters of the state by religious institutions therefore is inappropriate and unworthy of academic scrutiny.¹

Secondly, the most definite information on the topic originates from authors other than the monks themselves, a problem common—for example—to Japan and both Eastern and Western Christianity. As Alan Forey informs us, Western monastic military orders produced “little or no narrative” of their own, forcing us to rely on general chronicles (such as histories of the conquest of Livonia and Prussia written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries for the Teutonic Order). The bulk of extant documents on these orders are limited to “property rights and privileges,” and consequently, despite their importance and extensive possessions, they have received “limited attention” in modern historical works. “Histories of religious orders either ignore them completely or treat them in a perfunctory

¹ Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha: Monastic Warriors and Sōhei in Japanese History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 3–5. For a similar comment, see Michael Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord: the Military Orders of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 13.

manner,” while studies on knighthood focus exclusively on secular knights, and those on crusades only devote attention to their military exploits.²

The problem is magnified in the Eastern Christian world, where the dearth of first-hand information has severely impacted the study of monasticism in general. With a few exceptions, members of Eastern Orthodox monasteries did not leave accounts of themselves, so that modern historical studies on these institutions rely principally on auxiliary documents or narratives from the outside (even if from within the same religious environment). In the words of Paul Bushkovitch, while in the Byzantine Empire most patriarchs were monks, their duties were mainly administrative, and their monasteries produced no scholars. The paucity of studies is particularly felt in the case of Russia, whose monastic history has been largely ignored for decades. Apart from a few topics, most areas of church history of Russia, including monasticism, “have remained virtually untouched. Moreover, research has been restricted because of the lack of basic source publications for the history of religion and the Church.”

The historian of Russia must work with largely unpublished sources and spend great amounts of time merely to establish elementary facts. . . for over a century historians and philologists alike in Russia and in the West have mined the texts for political ideas, national ideas, stylistic conventions, anything imaginable but not primarily for religious ideas. . . Orthodoxy, even more in Russia than in Byzantium, is far less well-known than any of the western forms of Christianity.³

On the other hand, Latin Christian and Buddhist monastic scholars have amply discussed their institutions, but leaving out explicit mention of martial activities except in the figurative sense only, such as the Christian hagiographical topos of monks as warriors who battle externalized inner demons.⁴ Other obstacles to

² Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Toronto and Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3.

³ Paul Bushkovitch, “The Life of Saint Filipp: Tsar and Metropolitan in the Late Sixteenth Century,” *Medieval Russian Culture*, ed. Michael S. Flier and Daniel Rowland. California Slavic Studies, 2 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 29–46; here 30. A further reason for the neglect of monastic studies in Russia until recently was the “rigid ideological perspective” of the Soviet period, when monasticism was only studied as a feudal entity. After the fall of the Soviet Union studies have resumed, but mainly concentrating on early modern and modern times. Scott M. Kenworthy, “Monasticism in Russian History,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10.2 (2009): 307–31; here 310.

⁴ This concept was already in use in Athanasius’s *Life of St. Antony*, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.asp> (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2013), 124. It is also emphasized in the very Prologue of the Rule of St Benedict (“who, giving up thine own will, takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King”), <http://>

a clear interpretation of the sources are contingent upon specific customs. For example, in East Asia information on martial techniques is the privileged secret of the various schools, because originally “practice was carried out in secrecy and the school very existence was frequently concealed from the authorities. Fighting traditions were rarely recorded, but passed on by word of mouth only to those sworn to secrecy.”⁵ Therefore only some details are made available to outsiders, usually obtained from modern oral sources.

The single most revealing Western source for monastic martial practices remains the fifteenth-century chivalric novel *Jehan de Saintré*, which is the work of a squire and not of a monk.⁶ This is the vaguely autobiographical work of Antoine de La Sale, written around 1456, at a time when the elderly squire served the count of Saint-Pol as tutor for his sons, after a long career in the service of princely houses (three successive dukes of Anjou before his appointment with the count of Saint-Pol).⁷ De La Sale belonged, therefore, to a social environment that viewed the monastic world from the outside, and not without some mistrust

www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule2/files/rule2.html, 152 (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2013). In particular, the motif of the demons impersonating hostile soldiers persists as late as the seventeenth century, as for example in the visions of the Russian monk Eleazar. Roy R. Robson, *Solovki: The Story of Russia Told Through Its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 87.

⁵ Howard Reid and Michael Croucher, *The Way of the Warrior: the Paradox of the Martial Arts* (1983; Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1991), 19. For example, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is based upon a body of theory known to be around two thousand years old, and yet it was not recorded until 1750.

⁶ There are several versions of the text translated into modern French, based on different manuscripts and presumed corrections by the author. None seems to be free from ambiguities but most problems seem related to their critical content. See, for example, the critique of two recent translations into modern French in Jane H. M. Taylor, “Joël Blanchard (ed) Antoine de La Sale, ‘Jehan de Saintré,’ trans. Michel Quéreuil,” *Medium Aevum* 65.2 (1996): 351. For the purpose of my brief analysis, which is focused on a single episode and is more concerned with general meaning than actual wording, I have relied on the following editions: Antoine de La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. Jean Misrahi and Charles A. Knudson (Geneva: Droz, 1965), and the online version dated 1911, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011157948> (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2013). See also Antoine de La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. Joël Blanchard and Michel Quéreuil. *Livre de Poche. Lettres gothiques* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1995). The text will be available in English translation soon: Antoine de La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré: A Late Medieval Education in Love and Chivalry*, trans. Roberta L. Krueger and Jane H. M. Taylor. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), reviewed by Albrecht Classen in *Mediaevistik* 27, forthcoming.

⁷ Antoine de La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. Jean Misrahi and Charles A. Knudson (see note 6), x, xiii–xv.

or even hostility. Further, at this time monasticism no longer enjoyed a privileged status while devotional practice and imagery were becoming part of everyday life (the famous contamination of the sacred with the profane as criticized by Huizinga).⁸

The plot of the novel is quite predictable, as it follows the career of the young Jean from being valet to squire and royal chamberlain thanks to the guidance and monetary support of a young, widowed court lady. Toward the end of the novel, however, after the hero goes through the mandatory tournaments and campaigns against infidels, the narrative takes an unexpected turn. While Jean is far away at the emperor's court his lady falls in love with a gallant abbot, who seduces her with lavish hospitality and aggressive flirting. Once the rival returns, the new lover—who remains unnamed and identified only as “damp Abbez”—is unwilling to give up his conquest. He invites Jean, the lady, and her entourage to a banquet, during which he criticizes contemporary jousting practices, and after dining he challenges Jean to a wrestling match, explaining with mocking modesty that his religious status precludes the use of arms: “Ha! monseigneur de Saintré, je ne suis batiiller ne homme d'armes pour moy combatre avecques vous; je suis un pouvre simple moyne qui vys de ce que avons pour l'amour de Dieu” (Oh, my lord of Saintré, I am not a fighter or a military man as to engage in combat against you; I am a poor simple monk living with little for the love of God).⁹ Then, in full view of the guests the abbot rolls down his hoses and leaps into the air “monstrant ses grosses cuisses pelues et velues comme un ours” (revealing his muscular, hairy thighs like a bear) then grasps Jean in a vice-like grip while tripping him with his foot, and twice throws him to the ground to the merriment of the ladies. Not satisfied with this show of strength, he pokes fun at the helpless victim as he begs him loudly and scornfully for mercy. A humiliated Jean acts unruffled, but secretly plots his revenge. Soon he offers a banquet in his turn to the lady and the victorious Lothario. After dinner he tricks the rival into arming himself, and, once on equal footing, openly challenges him to a proper duel. Ignoring the abbot's protests, he easily corners him and with a dagger pierces the cheeks and tongue that had dared malign chivalry. Then he marches off leaving the disloyal woman in tears with her whimpering lover.¹⁰

Before dismissing the scene as pure fancy, it is opportune to notice the importance that the episode holds for its author. In the first place, it represents the

⁸ J(oh)an Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1919; New York and London: Doubleday, 1989), 152.

⁹ De La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré* (see note 7), 279.

¹⁰ De La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré* (see note 7), 280–83, 286–87, 292–300.

climax of the story. After Jean's dramatic exit the novel concludes hastily with his public unmasking of the lady's treason and a few paragraphs that condense the rest of his career: he lived a glorious life and after death was remembered as a champion of French chivalry.¹¹ And secondly, the author unequivocally confirms this unexpected aspect of monastic behavior. After the fateful wrestling match he has the elder monks protest to the abbot that his behavior had been unseemly and potentially detrimental to the reputation of the monastery, because he had repeatedly bested and taunted the young man "publiquement" (openly) against the rules. This observation seems to indicate that there was nothing unusual with practicing wrestling in private, and that the only impropriety was provoking a member of a rival social group. And in fact, a few paragraphs earlier, he has Saintr  attempt to excuse himself from the contest saying to his lady:

Vous savez que oncques je ne fus luicteur, et ces seigneurs moynnes en sont les maistres, aussi de jouer a la paulme, gecter barres, pierres et paulz de fer, et tous autres essais quant ilz sont a leur priv , et pour ce je s ay bien, ma dame, que contre lui je ne pourroye riens.¹²

[You know that I have never been a wrestler, while these monks are masters at it, and also at tennis, weight throwing, and all other sports when they are in private, and for this reason, my lady, I know I cannot compete against him]

Another argument against judging this episode unbelievable is that it takes place within an essentially realistic novel, one that looks rather like a chivalric manual in the tradition of the didactic literature of the period (books on manners, on running households, on serving princes, and so on). Unlike other chivalric novels (for example the *Livre du C ur d'amour  pris* by one of de La Sale's own masters, Duke Ren  of Anjou) it lacks the element of magic, following instead rather pedantically the courtly career of the protagonist in an idealized but convincing setting. Whatever the literary merits of this work, its usefulness as historical document is undeniable, lending credibility to at least some of its characters.¹³ Among a host of more or less colorless figures, the abbot stands out as an unexpectedly commanding personality. He is the only true villain in the story, and yet

¹¹ De La Sale, *Jehan de Saintr * (see note 7), 308.

¹² De La Sale, *Jehan de Saintr * (see note 7), 280, 284–85.

¹³ A current theory has the protagonist himself modeled on the real-life Burgundian knight Jacques de Lalaing. See, for example, Dorothea Heitsch, "Jehan de Saintr : Questioning a Historical Phenomenon," *Biblioth que d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 64.2 (2002): 241–50 and Catherine Emerson, "No Way to Treat Your Mother: Understanding Petit Jehan de Saintr 's Rage," *French Studies* LXV.4 (1993): 429–43. However, from the two articles, which include a survey of current scholarship on the subject, it appears that neither the lady nor the abbot has been identified.

he fits neither the standard caricature of the lazy, gossipy, and gluttonous monk of medieval fabliaux nor that of the treacherous, greedy, and vile monk present in other medieval literature, such as the *Gest of Robyn Hood* or *Robin Hood and the Monk*.¹⁴ On the contrary, he is a virile, bold figure who exploits a seemingly accepted physical advantage proper to his vocation. In fact, this character is so realistic as to suggest a real-life person known to the author (and possibly his readers). The strong anti-monastic bias of de La Sale, while rooted in familiar medieval attitudes, seems to be triggered specifically by the abbot threading dangerously close to forbidden territory, as he attempted to usurp martial prerogatives.¹⁵

It is possible—and even likely—that de La Sale's scorn was shared by his audience, but there is no clear indication from his work of why knights come to despise fighting monks. To cast some light on this late development one must start by looking backward to the twelfth century, when a militant Christianity was engaged in a fight for domination against an equally aggressive Islam, and see how martial activities could then be integrated within religious tradition. William of Tyre mentions that the fiery words of Peter the Hermit calling for a mass pilgrimage to free the Holy Land reached also the religious community, as bishops encouraged their flock, “fulfilling the words of the Lord: ‘I come not to send peace but a sword.’ [Matt 10:34] From the cloisters many monks went forth, and recluses likewise left the cells where they had voluntarily secluded themselves for the love of God.”¹⁶ There seems to be a subtle evolution in thought throughout the Middle Ages with respect to this uneasy cohabitation of roles. In the early Middle Ages the distinction between military and religious life was stark, witness the unambiguous words of the ninth-century abbot of Saint-Mihiel Smaragdus:

14 In the first, a long poem of four hundred and fifty six stanzas, the villains are two greedy monks. One is the abbot of St Mary's in York, who tries to force into default an impoverished knight who has mortgaged his estates to him; and the other is the cellarer of St Mary's, who denies any knowledge of the knight's debt. In the poem *Robin Hood and the Monk*, Robin's entry into St Mary's, while on his way to Nottingham, is spotted by a monk who bars the town gates and alerts the sheriff. Thinking Robin captured, Little John sets out after the monk. Cornered, the cowardly monk cries for mercy, but Little John beheads him. Along the same lines, in the fourteenth-century poem *Robyn Hood's Death*, the hero is betrayed by a prioress his cousin. James C. Holt, *Robin Hood* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 17–19, 28–29, 76.

15 The lady (called in the novel “Madame des Belles Cousines”) is the other significant character that has received negative reviews by some modern critics (but has been defended by others). For a critical appraisal of responses to this character, see, for example, Lynn T. Ramey, “Laughter and Manhood in the ‘Petit Jehan de Saintré’ (1456),” *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 31 (2006): 164–73.

16 William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krev, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 93.

There are secular soldiers (*milites seculi*) and there are soldiers of Christ (*milites Christi*); but secular soldiers bear feeble and perilous arms, while those of the soldiers of Christ are most powerful and excellent; the former fight against the enemies in such a way that they lead both themselves and those they kill to everlasting punishment; the latter fight against evil so that after death they may gain the reward of eternal life; the former fight in such a way that they descend to Hell, the latter fight so that they may achieve glory; the former fight in such a way that after death they serve with devils in Hell, the latter so that they may possess the kingdom of heaven in eternity with the angels.¹⁷

During the eleventh century the distinction seems to have become even more pronounced, as monastics were encouraged to leave worldly affairs completely.¹⁸ But things had apparently turned around by the twelfth century after the success of the First Crusade. Now a new kind of fighting was no longer “a purely secular activity. It was coming to be seen as a work of charity and a way of expressing love for God.” The Abbot Guibert de Nogent went so far as to view participation in a crusade as an alternative route to salvation for members of the knightly order, akin to monasticism. To bridge the earlier gap between the two the term *miles Christi*, which previously indicated the monk, now was applied to the warrior. “The way was open for the two kinds of *miles Christi* to be combined in the same person.”¹⁹

It should come as no surprise, then, that precisely during that time a group of knights were inspired to inaugurate a new model of coenobitical life through

¹⁷ Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 10.

¹⁸ Still, reality did not always fit theory as some sources of the period also mention “monks who took up arms” against bandits, out of necessity, and defend their actions. Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 14.

¹⁹ The text, in English, is reproduced in Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 13. “In our times God has instituted holy wars, so that the equestrian order and the erring people, who like ancient pagans were commonly engaged in mutual slaughter, might find a new way of meriting salvation. They are no longer obliged, as used to be the case, to leave the world and to choose the monastic life and a religious rule; they can gain God’s grace to no mean extent by pursuing their own profession, unconfined and in secular garb.” As Giles Constable has noted, the most common social division was not into the orders of *bellatores*, *oratores*, and *laboratores*, but into clerics (also called prelates, fathers, doctors); monks and nuns, and hermits, who left the world to serve God; and “men and women who lived and worked in the world.” This classification was paralleled with three groups based on levels of chastity: of the continent (those who abstained from sexual activity, sometimes called widows and widowers), the virgins, and the married. For many writers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, even if monks themselves, “the basic social division was between the clergy and the laity.” Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 252, 294.

the military religious orders. Their undisputable dual status is summarized by Jonathan Riley-Smith as follows: “Military Orders are orders of the Roman Catholic Church, the brothers (and occasionally sisters) of which are professed religious, subject to the usual obligations of, and constraints in, canon law, except that some of them had the right and duty to bear arms.”²⁰ The first spontaneous association for the protection of pilgrims was apparently formed in 1120 and then quickly welcomed into the Church structure, and the ad-hoc circumstances of its birth urgently elevated to a religious mission. In 1139 with the bull *Omne Datum Optimum* Pope Innocent II established formally the Order of the Temple as a legitimate “sacra institutio et religiosa militia” (sacred institution and religious militia) with a permanent abode, and decreed:

that the religious life which is established in your house, thanks to the inspiration of the divine grace, shall be observed there inviolably, and that the brothers serving the omnipotent Lord therein shall live in chastity, without personal goods, and confirming their profession by words and morals shall prove obedient and subject to their master or to his delegates. Moreover, inasmuch as the house has deserved to be the source and origin of your holy institution and religious order, so it shall be considered to be for ever the head and ruler of all those places belonging to it. In addition to this we ordain that on your death, Robert, beloved son of the Lord, or that of any of your successors, none of that same house shall be put at the head of the brothers unless he be both a military and religious person who has made profession of the habit of your brotherhood, and that he who is to be appointed at the head shall be elected by none other than all brothers or at least by the sounder and healthier part.²¹

The concept was so novel that a certain Hugh (perhaps either Hugh of Payns, the founder of the order, or Hugh of St Victor) wrote a letter in which he expressed fears that the new order would be considered less worthy than more traditional ones.²² But their most enthusiastic supporter, Bernard de Clairvaux, went to lengths to extol their mission, claiming for them unequivocally the dual status of religious men and warriors:

in some wonderful, unique way they are seen to be meeker than lambs and fiercer than lions, so that I am almost in doubt as to whether they ought to be called knights or monks.

20 Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Templars and Hospitallers as Professed Religious in the Holy Land*. The Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 1.

21 *The Templars: Selected Sources*, trans. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate. Manchester Medieval Sources Series, advisers Rosemary Horrox and Janet L. Nelson (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 61.

22 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 15–26.

Unless, of course I were to call them by both names, which would be more exact, as they are known to have the gentleness of a monk and the bravery of a knight.²³

The innovation must have been accepted, after all, as in the course of the twelfth century some existing religious institutions in Syria were transformed into military orders: the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (which maintained hospitals for the sick and the poor), the order of St Lazarus (originally a leper hospital), the Teutonic order (that began as a German hospital outside Acre and that soon engulfed other east European orders), and the order of St Thomas of Acre (which originated as a house of regular canons). By the mid-to-late twelfth century Templars and Hospitallers were recruited to participate in the reconquest of Spain, while military Spanish orders were also established. The major ones were Calatrava (Castile), Santiago (Leon), Alcántara, and Avis (Portugal).²⁴

Since the onset there were a few dissenting voices, which could be fitted into two categories. The first is represented by those who opposed the very idea that acts of war could be meritorious. As Forey writes, Walter Map (late twelfth century) in a passage of the *De nugis curialium* said: “I do not know who taught these to overcome force with force. They take up the sword and perish by the sword.” And early in the thirteenth century Jean de Vitry wrote in a sermon that they should not take up the sword for any reason, not even to engage in “physical struggle against the enemies of the Church.” More ambiguous is the disapproval of St. Thomas Aquinas who, in the late thirteenth century, thought that religious military orders were legitimate provided that they would not wage war for “worldly ends.” During the same period, however, the orders grew in membership and wealth, and the most frequent criticism leveled at them changed focus. Mathew Paris and William of Tyre chastised them for “abandoning their early humility” and the same Vitry accused them of being so arrogant as to despise humble tasks and even provoke and abuse secular knights. Forey concludes that the strongest criticism against these orders was directed at their “pride and avarice,” as it “was commonly held that brethren lived a life of ease and luxury and devoted their revenues to this end.”²⁵ It was not, then, directed at their military activities per se, but it was rather an extension of the general criticism of

²³ *The Templars: Selected Sources* (see note 21), 224.

²⁴ Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 17–38. William of Tyre also gives a positive account of the origins of the Templars: “certain pious and God-fearing nobles of knightly rank, devoted to the Lord, professed the wish to live perpetually in poverty, chastity, and obedience.” William of Tyre, *History of Deeds* (see note 16), 524.

²⁵ Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 39, 204–06.

chivalry: its greed, love of luxury, and arrogance, especially (in their case) in violation of professed vows of poverty and humility.²⁶

These religious institutions were also accused of granting their applicants an unfair upward mobility as they were notoriously less careful than more traditional ones in selecting their members and less rigid in applying monastic discipline. For example, they served meat regularly, observed an abbreviated liturgy, and allowed talk even in the refectory. Perhaps because of the need to replace brethren fallen in battle they accepted candidates on the spot forgoing the novitiate, but this resulted in a large number of illiterate applicants, who could later breach rules because of ignorance. This deficiency emerged from the Templar trials: while some members resulted well informed as to the rules, others were not, and offered widespread differences in interpretation of rituals and sacraments.²⁷

As mentioned earlier, members of military religious orders did little to document their vocation and daily life, but from the few extant documents (for example the depositions of Templars at their trial) it appears that the activities related to war had little impact on monastic routine, which was usually based on existing regular observances.²⁸ All brothers had to attend services, although the many illiterate lay brethren were merely required to listen as chaplains recited offices, and to recite a few prayers for the canonical hours. In between campaigns, and in most cases for those residing away from war fronts, non-canonical hours were filled with other pursuits. Apparently (even if sources are not too clear on this point), meditative reading or other intellectual activities were usually not part of their routine, and manual work was not expected of all brethren of military orders. Yet in practice many non-military sergeants (ranking below the knights) performed manual tasks related to agriculture, household, and crafts, while others cared for the sick and poor and provided hospitality.²⁹ Paradoxically, proof of their monastic status is confirmed most blatantly by the disposition of the Templars who survived their trials for heresy: they were reassigned to other

26 Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord* (see note 1), 155. Among the early critics he mentions (156) Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, and Issac of Stella, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Étoile.

27 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 196, 199–202. *The Templars: Selected Sources* (see note 21), 37.

28 The Templars, after first imitating the canons of the Holy Sepulcher, adapted later some rules borrowed from St Benedict. The rule for the Hospitallers was based on that of St Augustine, and Calatrava received its first rule from Cîteaux in 1164. All took the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity (except for the order of Santiago where only conjugal chastity was sufficient for married members, while unmarried ones lived in common). They could not sleep naked or together in the same bed. Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 188–89.

29 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 190–92.

religious houses, because their monastic vows were still valid, and so they could not return to secular life.³⁰

What kind of people chose to be warrior monks? It is difficult to discover from the inadequate sources what social groups provided recruits. Sufficient records exist for masters of the Templars and Teutonic order to determine that the majority came from the middle and lesser nobility, and a thirteenth-century Hospitaller regulation indicated that brethren would continue in their previous occupations, implying that many came from peasant or artisan origins. Those admitted to the rank of knight in both Temple and Hospital had to be of knightly descent and legitimate birth (while the Teutonic order allowed the master broader latitude in deciding admission). The same rules were relaxed for Santiago and only appeared for Calatrava in the fourteenth century. Also, while in the early Middle Ages it was common to commit children as oblates, by the time of the foundation of the military orders that practice was less common.³¹ In any case, apparently candidates had to be mature enough to bear arms and make their own decision, so that their age seems to range between fourteen and fifteen, with the majority of those admitted being adults.³² The motives for recruits to join military orders are also not clear. In the Templar admission ceremony the postulant was warned that he should only be motivated by the desire to abandon the evils of the world, to serve God, and to live a life of penance for the salvation of his soul. Similar motives are stressed in documents from other orders, but there is evidence of more material reasons: for example, Jean de Vitry lamented that many joined in order to enjoy a few luxuries that would be denied to them in the world, such as a real pillow on which to sleep.³³

In all orders the brethren who gave military service were knights and sergeants-at-arms, the ones being better equipped than the others, but basically performing the same functions. The non-military sergeants could also be pressed into service as well as individuals who only joined the convents for a specific period (but temporary service declined by the thirteenth century). The orders could also obtain service from their own vassals and from mercenaries, among whom natives called *turcoples*. After the loss of the Templars archives little is known of their numeric strength, but from extant records on Hospitallers and

30 Helen J. Nicholson, *The Knights Templar on Trial: The Trial of the Templars in the British Isles 1308–1311* (Stroud, UK: History Press, 2009), 195.

31 Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 53.

32 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 134–37, and Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord* (see note 1), 159.

33 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 139–42.

Teutonic order, including the—often unreliable—information from chroniclers, it seems that their number was low: for example, one-hundred-eighty Teutonic knights fielded against Russia in 1268 out of a total of eighteen thousand troops.³⁴ However, the brethren who served in campaigns were apparently highly respected by their opponents.

According to an Arab chronicler, Saladin would execute captured Templars and Hospitallers because of their fanaticism and bravery. They were presumably also more disciplined than secular troops. The Templar customs (later copied by the Teutonic order) includes specific regulations for marching, pitching camp, foraging and collecting wood, responding to alarms, and attacking. Their binding vows of obedience were reinforced by threats of punishment: losing the habit for a period or being put in irons for attacking without permission, expulsion for desertion in battle, and death for going over to the enemy. They could also provide prolonged service more regularly than secular contingents, especially town militias, who were available only for limited time.

Some crusading treatises composed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century praised their obedience, and Raymond Lull “claimed that their constant experience of war made brethren of a military order preferable to other troops.” Because of this, it was common to place them in the vanguard or rear-guard of crusading forces to lead or cover retreats.³⁵ And yet, there is another side to the picture. It seems that sometime they were not available to fight infidels because they were busy fighting other Christians in pursuit of their own interests, and both Templars and Hospitallers were known to have refused to help in actions that they had opposed. Sovereigns would complain that they interfered with truces, or made their own alliances, or were reluctant to fight, and in some cases they were openly accused of being on familiar terms with the infidels.³⁶

Surprisingly enough, little information survives on the military training of warrior brethren. The early Templar Latin Rule of 1129 deals with religious observance, allotment of clothes and equipment, and moral code. And the French Rules (one dated before 1187 and the other almost a century later) deal with observance of religious feasts and punishment for various forms of misbehavior.³⁷ In fact, no mention is made of military exercises as part of daily routine in a war

³⁴ Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 54–59, 77–82.

³⁵ Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 83–90.

³⁶ Forey *Military Orders* (see note 2), 92–93, 208–09. The last charge, which in fact testifies to their pragmatism when living in understaffed garrisons in border areas, may also signal an evolution in attitudes toward their neighbors.

³⁷ *The Templars: Selected Sources* (see note 21), 31–54, 117–25.

theater, such as Rhodes in the periods between Turkish attacks, even if it makes sense that they would have taken place.³⁸ Further, as Helen Nicholson has shown, when the English Templar houses were raided by the emissaries of King John in 1308–1311 very few weapons were found: in London a few crossbows and swords, a couple of axes (one possibly a souvenir), and a set of armor. From the inventories taken of their insular possessions it results that “military activities there were mainly ceremonial or barely defensive.” Appropriately, contemporary pictures of Templars in Europe “show them dressed like monks, with long robes and wearing the cap of a religious man, rather than dressed as warriors.” From their statements at the trials in France and England it results that they did serve for a short time in war areas in the Middle East, but then were assigned to administrative duties once back in Europe.³⁹

Convents in urban settings away from dangerous border regions were administrative centers with no military function. They housed a small group of thirteen to eighty brethren, but some Teutonic and English Hospitallers houses had as few as three, headed by a commander or prior—frequently rotated—responsible for discipline and the enforcement of the rule. Usually they were far outnumbered by outsiders such as *donati* (who lived a semi-religious life), paid employees, and slaves.⁴⁰

While the above information seems contradictory in places and too miserly in others, it is nevertheless sufficient to allow the reader to trace in broad outlines the trajectory of these institutions. They started as small bands of (mainly) French knights with functions rendered urgent by the conquest of the Holy Land.

38 See, for example, Guillaume Caoursin, *The Siege of Rhodes (1482)* (Delmar, NY: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, Inc., 1975). It is noteworthy that medieval sources in general make little mention of military training, except in a few exceptional cases. For example, when two civilians were sentenced to a “fight to the death” in Valenciennes in 1455, in Georges Chastellain, “Chroniques,” *Œuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. 5 (1863–1866; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), 3:41–49.

39 Nicholson, *Templars* (see note 30), 75–76. Citation from Nicholson, *Knights Templar: A New History*, 48, 125–27, and “Francesco Tommasi, “Fonti epigrafiche della domus Templi di Barletta per la cronotassi degli ultimi maestri provinciali dell’ordine nel regno di Sicilia,” *Militia Sacra: Gli ordini militari in Europa e Terrasanta*, ed. Enzo Coli and Francesco Tommasi (Perugia: Società Editrice San Bevinante, 1994), 167–202. See also Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 41.

40 Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 150–53. Convents that housed sisters were under a prioress, and she was at times in charge of a joint house including brethren. Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 181. In contrast, see the new headquarters of the Hospitallers in Rhodes after their conquest of the island in 1310. The building complex was to hold “two hospitals, a Catholic cathedral, their convent, the arsenal, mint, admiralty, and dormitories, plus a lavish Grand Master’s palace with private apartments and dining hall with minstrels’ gallery.” Robert Douglas Smith and Kelly DeVries, *Rhodes Besieged: A New History* (Stroud, UK: The History Press, 2011), 18.

Soon after, they were officially instituted as mixed orders of warrior monks who attracted donations and recruits, and found imitators in other countries of Europe, from Hungary to Spain, and from Italy to the Baltic. Some orders disappeared in a short time, but the principal ones rode high throughout the following century, buoyed by donations in lands, castles, and cash, but by the fourteenth century showed signs of decline. In the Near East, the loss of territories culminating with the fall of Acre rendered useless the mission of the Templars (whose dramatic demise has inspired both history and fiction). In the Baltic and Prussia, the oppressive power of the Teutonic Knights coupled with their brutal suppression of paganism made them object of envy and spite, and led to their withering away with the Reformation.⁴¹ Only the Hospitallers enjoyed a longer period of popularity thanks to their choice of residence away from the continent, as they made of Rhodes the last bulwark against the conquering Ottoman Turks. By then the Spanish orders had become completely secularized, embroiled in the bloody dynastic infighting of Castile and Aragon, and gradually were reduced under royal control.⁴² Military religious orders had come a full circle, from being enthusiastically accepted, then tolerated, then envied and resented, then openly manipulated or destroyed by secular powers, with their decline due in part to external circumstances and in part caused by the (perceived or real) decadence of their own institutions.

Two centuries after their original foundation a weariness of holy wars seems to have settled in a Europe distracted by other concerns, so that the ambiguous late-medieval testimonies about them leave the reader with a general impression that the time for the mixing of religious and martial fervor was past, and war was claimed (back?) by a specialized professional caste. By the time de La Sale wrote his work no memory of the awe in which those fighting monks had

41 In 1523, after a visit by Luther, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order became Protestant and in 1525 the whole Order in Prussia was dissolved. When Livonia was attacked by Ivan IV in 1558 the Knights of Livonia were defeated and three years later secularized their Order. Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord* (see note 1), 181. In the fifteenth century “the rule of the corporation came to be considered oppressive and alien in Prussia.” Michael Burleigh, *Prussian Society and the German Order: an Aristocratic Corporation in Crisis c. 1410–1466*, ed. J. H. Elliott, Olwen Hufton, and H. G. Koenigsberger. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 171. In Prussia and Livonia, during the campaigns against pagans, “[m]en were killed and women and children seized; property was burnt or pillaged,” and the pagans’ peace offers were not accepted unless accompanied by conversion. And if conversion was not forthcoming, “slaughter could be an end in itself.” Pagans “were treated differently from Muslims in Mediterranean lands,” as they were apparently seen “as primitive and warlike people with only a rudimentary religion.” Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 47–49.

42 Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord* (see note 1), 152, 181–82.

once been held seems to have survived, and yet his abbot displayed an expected mastery of unarmed combat. Was this an exception? The question demands a brief assessment of similar practices in societies that were minimally influenced by western European monastic traditions, but which are known to have a history of autochthonous monastic institutions. For this survey the concept of medieval times must be stretched to include what for Western history would be more properly called late antiquity and early modern times, because the developments of monasticism in other parts of the world followed different time schedules.

As J. M. Hussey has written, in the Byzantine world the emperor was the acknowledged head of the Church, and the patriarch of Constantinople, his partner in theory, was in practice his subordinate. Eastern monasticism was less assured of its place in the Church than in the West, and “lacked the vigor” to differentiate into orders, reflecting rather the personal purpose of individual founders. Most powerful monasteries were urban institutions, founded by lay people to serve a multiplicity of purposes: tax-exempt charitable foundations, retirement homes for selves and relatives, family burial places, and (in the case of princes) prisons for political rivals.⁴³ Those monasteries were completely dependent on lay sponsors in defining their mission, liturgy, diet, and daily routine. In exchange, they were the beneficiaries of generous gifts of money and food, from private purses, public treasury, or the personal imperial chest.⁴⁴ The boundary between laic and monastic life was also extremely porous, with monasteries serving as temporary refuge from financial or political reversals or even only social embarrassment: “politicians and soldiers, Emperors and scholars entered monastic life, but only for as long as was convenient.”⁴⁵ As expected, there is no mention of independent martial activities in institutions that were an extension of private property, and in fact, monasteries were apparently exempted from military service.⁴⁶

This model was followed in Kievan Rus, which vaunted a wealth of urban and suburban monasteries, and not only in the great centers of Kiev and Novgorod.⁴⁷

⁴³ J. M. Hussey, *Church & Learning in the Byzantine Empire 867–1185* (1937; New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1963), 118–19, 158–65.

⁴⁴ Hussey, *Church & Learning* (see note 43), 173. A rare source for daily routine is the *typicon* of Emperor John Comnenos for the staff of a religious hospital foundation, which includes detailed schedule for laundry, provision for a basin for doctors to wash hands between patients, and the schedule of patients' baths. Hussey, *Church & Learning* (see note 43), 185–86.

⁴⁵ Hussey, *Church & Learning* (see note 43), 162.

⁴⁶ Specifically, the foundation of Christodoulus at Patmos. Hussey, *Church & Learning* (see note 43), 191.

⁴⁷ Yaroslav Nikolaevich Shchapov, *State and Church in Early Russia, 10th–13th Centuries*, trans. Vic Schneierson (New Rochelle, NY, Athens, and Moscow: Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher, 1993),

But in Russia an opposite phenomenon became more obvious. Remote coenobia or hermitages would pop up in the wilderness thanks to the individual efforts of dedicated ascetics, strong personalities who usually ended up becoming saints. This form of “extreme” monasticism was perceived as the ultimate religious ideal in Orthodox minds, and such men were in demand as private confessors and spiritual guides, with the consequence that these foundations, too, could eventually be dominated by lay sponsors.⁴⁸

Monks led the colonization of the Northeast from the fourteenth century onward, when hermits in search of solitude founded communities in unsettled forests, only to be followed by peasants in search of free land. In turn the monks, in a renewed search for solitude, would push further into the forest, a pattern that repeated itself as Muscovite power expanded. Monasteries acted as “fortresses and colonizing centers” from which they spread Orthodox culture, a function that earned them the protection of Muscovite princes.⁴⁹ In these institutions, as Roy Robson affirms, the solitary monk’s mission was pervaded by the sense of heroic toil (*podvig*), realized through a harsh life of manual labor and “almost unending liturgical prayer . . . occurring daily from early morning to midnight, taking hours to finish.” During services monks stood, often in partial darkness, and “prostrated themselves hundreds of times a night.”⁵⁰

The most famous example of such a pioneering institution, the complex on the Solovetski archipelago (or Solovki) of the White Sea between Novgorod and Archangel, is quite revealing as to the confusing results of mixing monastic with military activities. The establishment was founded in the fifteenth century and soon came to include both a main monastery for communal life and several hermitages scattered in the forest. Thanks to the reputation of its founders and early abbots, and its location on a frontier area of strategic importance, it became an outpost of Orthodoxy in a hostile world threatened by Lutherans a century later. Throughout the reign of Ivan IV (1530–1584) and his immediate successor gifts to this institution combined bells with weapons and munitions, and its population

154. Apparently, their foundation and rule also depended on lay sponsorship, often of princely origin, and they, too, could be used as prisons for political enemies and, as in the West, they could also turn into banking institutions. Shchapov, *State and Church* (see note 47), 157, 164, 170.

48 This model was already present in the Byzantine world, for example the foundation of Patmos and the famous one of Mt. Athos, but, as Hussey remarks, there is scant information on “the houses on Mt. Olympus in Bithynia, and the great monastic republic of Athos” except that they were self-governing communities. Hussey, *Church & Learning* (see note 43), 166.

49 Kenworthy “Monasticism” (see note 3), 308.

50 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 7.

came to include pilgrims, laborers, and musketeers, while the religious complex assumed the aspect of a fortress.⁵¹

By the seventeenth century, a time of conflict with the Danes and Swedes, the number of troops had risen to over one thousand (while the monks numbered only around three hundred), and the closeness of religious and military men and their shared isolation from the rest of the country produced undesirable results, as monks adopted “soldierly ways,” allegedly indulging in coarse language and acts of violence (in one case even physically attacking an abbot).⁵² Gradually, monks seem to have slipped into a warring role, which eventually turned against the very power that had previously encouraged the trend. In 1673, when the monastery had become a bastion of Old Believers’ rebellion against the reforms of Patriarch Nikon, the archimandrite Nikanor, who was in charge of the compound, was seen to bless with holy water the cannons posted around the walls and instruct his gunners to target for killing the commander of the besieging tsarist forces. In the years following the eventual surrender of the monastery, monks were still leading peasants to rebellion, often followed by collective self-immolation inside burning chapels.⁵³

One has to turn to China to witness a more explicit acceptance of martial activities in monasteries—likely the product of the confluence of two cultural traditions—and yet even there the connection is not free from ambiguities. In the first century of the Common Era, when according to most sources Buddhism was introduced to China, the two prevalent systems of thought were Confucianism and Taoism (Daoism), both introduced a few centuries earlier.⁵⁴ As Kenneth

51 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 28–29, 32, 55–56, 74–75. In 1578 a contingent of ninety-five musketeers was placed in the islands under the command of Mikhail Ozerov, and the following year a battery of small cannons. Ivan’s successor Feodor (r. 1584–1598) in 1584 ordered the monks to build a stone fortress around the monastery. The designer was a monk named Trifon. Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 55–56.

52 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 75–76, 82–83.

53 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 112–16. This was not the first time in which a monk had assumed the role of military commander. In the 1620s the former cellarer of the Troitsa Lavra, Avraamii Palitsyn, retired to Solovki to end his days. He had been the “savior of Moscow” in 1612, when he took over the leadership of the militia that formed to chase away foreign occupiers. Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 84. Nor was this the last time: the outpost was once again threatened by a foreign power during the Crimean War. In 1854, despite its obsolete armament, it survived almost unscathed a relentless British naval bombardment relying (as it seemed) on sheer force of prayer, as the monks filed defiantly in procession. This event turned them once again into war heroes and the site into a destination of pilgrimage that inspired both religious and patriotic fervor. Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 156–57.

54 To avoid confusion, I will use both the older spelling (Tao) and the current (Dao) because some direct quotes are from texts prior to and some posterior to the official adoption of the pinyin

Ch'en explains, while the first was a philosophy of social and political action, the second was both a "sort of nature mysticism" that involved identification with the way of nature (Tao or Dao), and a more common "religion of salvation, having as its primary aim the attainment of immortal life by the individual," in the true sense of material immortality, by preventing the elements of the body from dispersing after death. This was achieved by ingesting the right food and "nourishing the spirit through meditation and concentration and the correct respiratory exercises."⁵⁵

Within this environment Buddhism went through various vicissitudes, being for the most part accepted by ruling dynasties (especially the "barbarian" ones in the North) and at times (briefly) persecuted. Particularly in its beginnings, when its doctrinal body had not yet been translated and digested by Chinese society, it tended to blend in with Taoist practices, especially in the daily habit of respiratory exercises and meditation. By the sixth century it had spread to all parts of China, and the numbers of Buddhist monasteries, texts, and ordained monks and nuns had increased exponentially, a process that continued in the following century under the favorable literary and artistic atmosphere of the T'ang dynasty.⁵⁶ It was in this atmosphere that a new current of Buddhism came to China.

A persistent legend associates the introduction of martial arts into Chinese monasteries with this new wave, called Ch'an in China and better known in the West with its Japanese name of Zen. The founder of this school was supposedly an Indian monk called Bodhidharma (ca. 448–527 C.E.), who in the first decades of the sixth century crossed the Himalayas to settle in a cave of the northern mountains near the thriving Buddhist monastery of Shaolin. After nine years of reclusive life he was eventually admitted into the monastery, where he taught a strict rule based on meditation, and to alleviate the harmful consequences of hours of immobility, introduced martial arts practice as part of a program of fitness for mind and body. Apparently he transmitted orally his exercise forms, based on established Indian fighting systems, which were transcribed much later in three works, *The Muscle Change Classic*, *The Marrow Washing*, and *The Eighteen Hand Movements of the Enlightened One*.

phonetic spelling. There is also some discrepancy in the spelling of localities (for example, Shaolin vs. Shao-lin, etc.).

⁵⁵ Kenneth K S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China, a Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 24–25. According to the author, the actual date of introduction of Buddhism is not known, but by the first century C.E. there are mentions of Buddhist monastic communities, and by the middle of the second century the first translations of Indian sutras made their appearance. Ch'en, *Buddhism* (see note 55), 43.

⁵⁶ Ch'en, *Buddhism* (see note 55), 47–51, 79, 203.

While not specifically designed for what came to be known as Chinese boxing, the exercises show awareness of boxing techniques for self-defense and for “reinvigorating the body after a period of meditation.” In the words of David Chow and Richard C. Spangler, Bodhidharma’s “primary concern was cultivation of Ch’i (intrinsic energy), the acquisition of control over this internal force and using its power to mold superior monks.”⁵⁷ A slightly different interpretation of the legend has Bodhidharma “taken aback when he saw the weak and emaciated bodies of the monks in the Shao-lin Temple of which he was the abbot. Being a firm believer in the adage of a sound mind in a sound body, he taught the monks a style of boxing for self-defense as well as for reinvigorating the body after a period of meditation.”⁵⁸

This tidy story is clearly the product of hindsight. Only one eyewitness account exists about Bodhidharma, written in 547 C.E. (almost thirty years after the monk’s alleged voyage) by a Chinese citizen of Lo-yang, who recalls meeting the old man who claimed to be one hundred and fifty years old at the time. After a long silence, suddenly in the eleventh century mention of his teaching of martial arts appears in writing. Unfortunately, all records of the Shaolin temple were destroyed in 1928, so there is no further evidence to be found. But his importance was revealed by the famous Taiwanese martial arts master Hung I-hsiang, who attributed to Bodhidharma the introduction of *wu-te* (martial virtue) based on “discipline, restraint, humility and respect for human life.”⁵⁹ Regardless of the reliability of the account, here is the first attempt at explicit correlation between martial exercises as physical relief from immobility and continuation of meditation in another form, a significant step forward in integrating monastic with martial activities with respect to the haphazard association imposed on Solovki

57 David Chow and Richard C. Spangler, *Kung Fu: History, Philosophy and Technique* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), 7–12. Zen Buddhism was at first opposed by the abbot of Shaolin (at the time a scholarly center of transcription of scriptures from the Sanskrit) because of its anti-intellectualism. Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), 10. The nine years waiting outside the temple was not necessarily a sign of disfavor toward Bodhidharma. As Thomas Merton observes, Buddhist monastic life is essentially one of pilgrimage (*angya*). The monk arrives to the monastery as a pilgrim either from another monastery or from secular life with a letter of introduction. He comes on foot as a postulant, carrying only a few belongings and only enough money to pay for burial if he is found dead along the road. He undergoes around five days of “probation,” sleeping outside, before being admitted inside the monastery. Even after being trained in the monastery, the monk will resume his pilgrimage, and even if he returns to the world he will maintain the mentality of pilgrim. Thomas Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1967), 225–27.

58 Ch’en, *Buddhism* (see note 55), 483–84.

59 Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 26–27.

by princely fiat, or even the hasty post-fact blessing of Bernard de Clairvaux on a group of men who had already formed an armed brotherhood.

This legend is significant also because of its association with the Ch'an (Zen) Buddhist school. As Thomas Merton explains, Zen strives for "non-attachment, and an apophatic contemplation" much like the practice of the Desert Fathers of Egypt, who sought "a perfect purity of heart" and thus "avoided making learning or conceptual knowledge too much of an end in itself." Its practitioners seek enlightenment "in the ordinary conduct of everyday life," rather than within the bondage of a system of doctrines.⁶⁰ The result is not

a mere quietistic cult of inner silence, to be achieved by complete withdrawal from ordinary life [but] is found in action It requires a real alertness and effort, and one's entire, undivided attention: however, the attention is given not to a theory or to an abstract truth, but to life in its concrete, existential reality, here and now.⁶¹

It is its "iconoclastic and anti-intellectual character" that allowed Ch'an to be expressed through a demanding physical routine.⁶²

However, this monastic activity of contemplation in motion was not to remain free of worldly contamination. Bodhidharma's disciples turned into a formidable fighting group (apparently comprising five hundred out of the fifteen hundred temple residents) that in 621 rescued the future Emperor T'ai Tsung (Taizong) of the T'ang Dynasty from a rebellious warlord. After this feat, all but one monk refused to be integrated into the regular Imperial army and returned to prayer. The grateful emperor allowed Shaolin to "accept and train a number of monks, destined to act as a reserve force, in martial arts. Its fame was such that masters from all over China converged there to discuss and refine their techniques."⁶³ Over a millennium later, in 1674, a former Ming partisan who had retired to Shaolin to study martial arts led a force of over a hundred monks to help the Qing emperor K'ang-Hsi (Kangxi) in a campaign to rid the coast of pirates. Once again, after fighting they returned to the monastery, refusing courtly honors.

⁶⁰ Merton, *Mystics* (see note 57), 22.

⁶¹ Merton, *Mystics* (see note 57), 221–22. For a discussion on apophatic theology see, for example, Andrew Louth, "Apophatic and Cataphatic Theology," *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 137–46.

⁶² The quote is from Ch'en, *Buddhism* (see note 55), 398.

⁶³ Huo Jianying, "The Martial Monks of Shaolin Temple," *China Today* 55, 5 (2006): 64–67; here 65. Apparently, the weapon of choice for both actions was the cudgel, which is sanctioned in Buddhism because it "subdues rather than kills the enemy." See also Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 61.

But this time the emperor, afraid of an independent body of fighters, with the help of a renegade monk besieged the monastery and burnt it down, killing the vast majority of its occupants. The complex was rebuilt after the emperor's death and adorned with frescoes reproducing "what the monks believed to have been the Temple's past."⁶⁴ These murals, which date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, supply a rare pictorial document of monks' martial activities, as they depict Shaolin residents in training with dark-skinned adversaries (a likely homage to the Indian origin of the art). The pairs exhibit themselves in a vast courtyard under the gaze of onlookers (other monks or dignitaries), in what is clearly a friendly competition.⁶⁵

Some researchers have suggested that, legends apart, martial arts likely originated from India, where a warrior caste had been in place long before the spread of Buddhism to the Far East. And it seems likely that the first monks to practice them may have been those travelling between China, Tibet, and India, through dangerous mountains infested by bandits (and there are personal accounts attesting to this scourge).⁶⁶ Like their Russian counterparts, then, Asian monks apparently assumed a military role out of necessity, but this alone does not explain why martial arts would become so closely aligned with a monastery in a particular region. A further source of confusion is that, according to Howard Reid and Michael Croucher, while Shaolin is credited with being the original center of martial arts in China, over four hundred distinctive styles exist there, attesting to diverse origins, and over the last fifteen hundred years several temple-monasteries with that name are known to have existed, some traceable, others not. Whether they took this name because they were centers of Zen Buddhism or of martial arts training is not known. "It is known, however, that in more than one monastery the fighting arts were used as tools for spiritual advancement."⁶⁷

As stated earlier, this connection is in line with pre-existing native beliefs. While Buddhism influenced greatly Taoism insofar as monastic organization, rules, and hierarchy are concerned, in turn it seems to have been changed by the contact. In their mature expression Taoist monastic rules share much with contemporary Buddhist ones: disregard of social structures, sexual control, dominance of community over individuals, humility, pacifism, and obedience. Taoist monks slept in individual cells, which had to be kept clean and empty except

⁶⁴ Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 62.

⁶⁵ Reproductions of the murals with their presumed dates can be found at <http://ironbodhisattva.blogspot.com/2013/09/shaolin-murals.html> (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2013).

⁶⁶ Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 29.

⁶⁷ Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 63.

for the bare essentials: bench, broom, knee support, scepter, chest of wood or bamboo, rope bed, scripture chest, lamp stand, plates and bowls and water pitcher, all of humble material.⁶⁸ There is, however, an important theoretical difference: one of the central tenets of Taoist monasticism is that a monk's life should be one of natural equilibrium and not excessive mortification, his very surroundings a mirror of celestial life and his reward a dignified longevity. He must strive to be in harmony with the creative power of nature or Tao (Dao), defined as the "universal principle that constitutes the material world," a harmony that is externalized through liturgy (communal prayer or chant usually on behalf of all beings). Significantly, among purification practices there were "gymnastic exercises patterned on cosmic energy movements (*doayin*) and meditation (*jingsi*)."⁶⁹

Apart from formal similarities, Taoism shares with Buddhism an inherent philosophical pacifism. For example, its foremost treatise, the *Tao Te Ching*, states that "in a war the winner is likely to be the side that enters the war with the most sorrow" and that "every victory is a funeral."⁷⁰ The Taoist refuses efforts to alter nature, accepting it instead with "unflinching fortitude" and enduring "without resistance." Paradoxically, though, this essentially pacifist belief can be externalized also through the forms of the soft (or defensive) martial arts.⁷¹ This philosophy is behind much of the physical training popularly known as Kung Fu. This "was not an art developed to perpetrate violence. It was designed to be responsive to outside or hostile forces only when necessary, i.e. when the serenity of nature was violated." Kung Fu trainees underwent a long training to achieve hard body conditioning. But once achieved, kicks and blows would "become mentally refined to the point of spontaneous reaction" and thus become instinctive. A master could easily dispose of several assailants, but he must do this while rejecting aggression, and only use his skills "to avoid, divert, neutralize or blend with any destructive force."⁷²

68 Livia Kohn, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism: a Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 30–34, 142, 172–74. The list of furnishing is similar to that of Buddhist Chinese monks, but more than Indian or western, reflecting the greater affluence of their institution. Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 143.

69 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 96–97, 142–43. The definition of Tao is in Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), 22.

70 Merton, *Mystics* (see note 57), 77.

71 Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), 19. In fact, the southern school of Chinese *wushu* (martial art), as opposite to the northern Shaolin school, was based on Wudang Mountain, home of famous Daoist temples. Jianying, "Martial Monks" (see note 63), 66.

72 Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), 18–20. The name Kung Fu (kungfu), which signifies only a generic "perfection through practice," has been widely used in the West (and recently

Taoism's most important contribution to the Chinese martial arts has been the creation of T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan, a system of complete balance and muscular control initially designed to maintain health, calm the mind, and increase longevity, to which later on were added methods of self-defense for advanced stages of training. T'ai Ch'i is "dynamic tranquility," said to possess a "soft quality," and from its "ultimate softness" (symbolized by water, that is not damaged by hard substances) the Yin and Yang are "generated within the context of Tao." The "gentle martial art" T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan (Great Ultimate Fist) seems to have been the invention of an obscure Tao priest, Chang Sanfeng, whose life has been placed variously in the Sung, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. He set out to find a way to prolong life via physical perfection, and (significantly) spent ten years at the Shaolin Buddhist monastery where he perfected the arts of meditation and self-defense. He then retreated to the mountains of Wu Tang where he observed how a snake, with its contortions, escaped from a praying hawk. Chang based his exercises upon the interaction of Yin and Yang, the movements of clouds, water, and trees, the stretching and contraction of muscles, and breathing exercises.

This was "the first physical therapy program specifically conceived to promote a sound body for longer life." And he made it clear that it was not created for the sole purpose of fighting. The Ch'i can be better preserved in motion than by still meditation, and so T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan is conceived as "meditation in motion."⁷³ This concept most economically expresses the fusion of the physical and the spiritual, mirroring the concept of the Yin and the Yang, gently flowing into each other, a soft meeting of forces that retain a small component of their opposite. It also helps in understanding how a foreign method of spiritual training and accompanying physical techniques could have yielded such abundant fruits on the fertile Taoist soil of China.

In contrast Tibet, which today it the most visible messenger of Buddhism, in the past presented an unambiguous portrait of warlike Buddhist monks, a phenomenon apparently rooted within the feudal structure of its society rather than based on philosophical or theological foundations. This country enjoyed an established reputation for aggressiveness well before its peculiar form of Buddhism gained ascendancy in the twelfth century, when this religion was

also by Chinese authors) to refer to Chinese martial arts, whose correct term is *wushu*. Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), xi–xii. I have adopted this convention because of the frequent use this term in its new meaning.

⁷³ Chow and Spangler, *Kung Fu* (see note 57), 21–26. In other terms, the "internal kungfu focuses on cultivating the innate vital energy that intensifies the impact of external kungfu, or the set of movements that constitute physical combat." Jianying, "Martial Monks" (see note 63), 64.

already on the wane in neighboring countries. Later on, throughout the thirteenth century, vicious intrigues and bloody battles occupied rival monasteries vying for Mongol protection and privileges. In the words of David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson:

Between 1267 and 1290 [the rival schools of] *Sa-Skya* and *'Bri-khung* waged intermittent war with the help of their Mongol supporters . . . It was a period of bitter, bloody deeds and unscrupulous intrigue, in which men of religion played the leading parts and monks fought in battles, for fighting seemed already to have become the responsibility of one class of monastic inmates.⁷⁴

Such pervasive belligerence had predated the Mongol attacks. Ch'en mentions

[h]uge monasteries which were in reality impregnable fortresses commanding control over certain areas, inhabited by monks who were ready to take up arms and fight if necessary. The aristocracy also began to vie for the abbotship of these monasteries . . . Once acquired, the abbotship would pass from father to son or nephew, and would thus create what amounted to monastic dynasties. Safely protected by the massive walls of the monasteries these dynasties waged wars against one another, and by the time the Mongols appeared on the scene at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the struggle had resulted in the survival of only three great monasteries.⁷⁵

Tibet had also maintained a peculiar tradition, which Snellgrove and Richardson describe in detail. In the great monasteries around Lhasa, which numbered up to thousands of residents, and whose organization resembled that of a large western university, existed until at least the mid-twentieth century "a special category of monks, drawn from the ranks of the 'lay-brethren'. These were nicknamed 'dop-dop' (*'ldob-ldob*'), a term which possibly means 'the swanks' . . . One may find parallels to these 'dop-dop' groups in some of our more aggressive student fraternities." They choose their own members, usually among the tough-looking novices, especially those not academically gifted. They performed the regular monastic duties, but as a closed group, ready to retaliate any insult from an outsider.

⁷⁴ David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 29–32, 72, 149. There is a gap in sources between the break-up of the kingdom in 842 and the thirteenth century. In the fourteenth century new texts surfaced that claimed being copies of more ancient ones. These texts mention as the founder of their form of Buddhism an Indian yogin, a sage-magician called Padmasambhava who visited Tibet at the end of the eighth century, and who "may have been a real person." Snellgrove and Richardson, *Tibet* (see note 74), 96.

⁷⁵ Ch'en, *Buddhism* (see note 55), 417.

It was common for feuds to arise between rival ‘dop-dop’ gangs, resulting in skirmishes or even deadly duels. These would not be punished because of the presence of elder ‘dop-dop’ in senior administrative posts. Fraternity members wore distinctive hair styles and accessories, and had their own code of honor that mandated loyalty and altruism within their group. In Lhasa they counted several thousands, a considerable force in a place that had no regular military or police force of its own. Usually, though, they would perform their regular duties of blowing trumpets and carrying processional banners during festivities, or serving tea, or (outside the monastery) earn money by helping with the harvest, plastering homes, or act as private guards for noble families. Most significantly for the analogy to the virile abbot of de La Sale, they were “in demand for their sports displays, high jumping, long jumping and stone-throwing, and at the request of nobles or wealthier monks they would put on a show in return for generous entertaining.”⁷⁶

This brief review would not be complete without mentioning the influence on monastic institutions of one of the most renowned medieval warrior culture, the Japanese *bushi*, better known in the West as samurai.⁷⁷ Adolphson argues that since around the fourteenth century, the figure of the warrior monk (what would later be called the *sōhei*) had a negative reputation among the rising military caste intent on establishing a monopoly of fighting. Samurai adorned their residences with scrolls fancifully depicting ancient battles between properly armed warriors and Buddhist monks, the latter with their heads wrapped in cowls and feet incongruously clad in thick sandals even in combat. The figure of the *sōhei* would eventually become

76 Snellgrove and Richardson, *Tibet*, (see note 74), 220–42, 107. The origin of this institution is apparently not recorded. But the authors quote a curse composed by the *Bon-po* (a rival native religion) sage Li-shu-stag-ring to protest the power of Buddhists with the royal court, and which contains a curious reference to armed gangs:

May the land of Tibet break into pieces

And these Buddhist monks lose their law!

May these nuns bear children

And these Buddhist priests lead *fighting gangs*! [italics mine]

May their monasteries be filled with battle,

And their temples set on fire!

Snellgrove and Richardson, *Tibet*, (see note 74), 107.

77 The term samurai can be traced back to the verb *saburahu* (to serve), a notion that can include armed service, and in the later Heian period (794–1185 C. E.) was used interchangeably with *bushi* (“military man”), who were warriors in the service of various feudal clans known as *buke* (a counterpart of the courtly *kuge*). By the early thirteenth century samurai were transformed from “men-at-arms in imperial and government employ to a ruling class of feudal lords and vassals.” Catharina Blomberg, *The Heart of the Warrior: Origins and Religious Background of the Samurai System in Feudal Japan* (Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent: Japan Library, 1994), 11, 14.

a symbol of the decadence of monasticism centuries later, in the Meiji era, when Buddhism was “put on the defensive by an ascending Imperial Shintō.” By then the figure of the *sōhei* had come to assume the meaning of “evil, degenerate monk” and portrayed fighting with halberds, a peasant weapon, and not the noble sword.⁷⁸ The evolution of this attitude could be helpful in decoding the enigma of de La Sale’s hostility.

Adolphson explains that apparently Buddhist monks adopted arms since the Heian era (794–1185 C.E.). Some sources “corroborate the existence of armed followers within monastic complexes at the time,” ready to murder or “wreak havoc,” called “rowdy monks” (*ransō*) or “evil monks” (*akusō*). However, they could be hailed as heroes in some circumstances (for example, when some of them fought pirates in 894 and again in 1013, a pattern already seen with both Solovki and Shaolin).⁷⁹ From the tenth century onward, as the imperial government gradually lost control of the provinces where unruliness and aggression dominated, it seems that violence also became more widespread among monasteries, involving “large factions or groups within monastic complexes, as well as warriors recruited outside the monasteries.” There is also evidence of increased bandit attacks against monastic properties as local lawlessness increased, engulfing monasteries in a “widespread social current.” In a recorded episode from the late tenth century, Ryōgen, a well-connected abbot, was attacked by “evil monks” wearing cowls called *katō*, pieces of cloth wrapped around the head to conceal their identity (what would become a key attribute of the *sōhei*). Ryōgen later

78 Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 118–20, 128–33, 147. The term *sōhei* seems to have been imported from Korea, where there was mention of monastic fighters since the thirteenth century. There monastic contingents were among the fiercest fighters against foreign invasions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and against Japanese pirates. During the Hideyoshi invasion of the 1590s two Korean monks were charged with organizing and training clerics in armies for guerrilla fighting. It is likely that Japanese warlords brought back the term *sunngun* (“monks armies,” in Japanese, *sōhei*) at the end of the sixteenth century Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 146. Blomberg also mentions that the fourteenth century witnessed a Shintō revival and the sixteenth century “the violent curbing of the power of the once again militant Buddhist establishments.” Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 22.

79 Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 25–26. The cultural paradox was carried onto literature, witness the transformation of the real-life giant monk-warrior Benkei (twelfth century) into “one of the greatest and most unselfish heroes in Japanese culture,” associated with chivalric exploits. Benkei challenged the legendary swordsman Minamoto Yoshitsune after defeating hundreds of opponents. And when Minamoto defeated him with an amazing display of swordsmanship, he became his faithful companion, accompanying him to his exile and later dying by his side. He is the subject of literature and plays. Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 5, 117, and Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 36.

forbade his own monks from wearing *katō* and from carrying concealed swords, bows, and arrows. In 988, three years after Ryōgen's death, a court edict prohibited monks from keeping an excessive entourage of armed followers and indulge in displays of power and unseemly elegance (an association of terms that recalls criticism of Christian military orders). By the eleventh century the growing factionalism led to regular armed skirmishes among competing cloisters. But the hundreds of extant examples do not reveal unambiguously whether the armed monks concerned were menial workers, disciples, or "warrior-retainers brought in from outside the monastery."⁸⁰

During the Gempei War of 1180–1185 between the rival clans of Taira and Minamoto sources report six episodes of monastic armed conflicts and arson, and the pattern continued into the following two centuries. As in Tibet, cloisters became a favorite way for nobles to identify lineages, so that conflicts arose from competing patronages, especially for abbotships. A clamorous example was the "turbulent abbot" Myoun who fought a pitched battle against his predecessor in 1167 and lost forty-eight men in order to gain the abbacy.⁸¹ Other conflicts originated as social disputes, as when lower-ranking members of monastic communities confronted their noble leaders over their monopolization of ranking titles (which apparently was supported by the civilian authorities). "The imperial court and the *bakufu* frequently condemned conflicts involving monasteries and clerics" and emanated several edicts, clearly ineffective, prohibiting the use of arms by religious members. And yet, in parallel with these edicts there are accounts of nobles mobilizing monastic forces under "monk-commanders" to assist in their own factional conflicts.⁸²

As in the case of Western military orders and Russian monks, Japanese monastic fighters left a minimum of information for posterity, even if some among them were literate, because they did not come from a class of people who would leave written personal records. Only their abbots left diaries and chronicles, from which appears that the bulk of monastic fighting forces "were comprised of lower-ranking members of the monastic communities and other affiliated common-

⁸⁰ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 26–34.

⁸¹ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 40, and Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 87. But his violence was not unique: as late as 1572, at the battle of Mikata-ga-hara, a Zen monk named Denchoro, who was secretary to Tokugawa Ieyasu, distinguished himself by taking 3 heads and was rewarded by his master with a family crest featuring 3 black stars (*ibid.*).

⁸² Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 40–46, 51. Specific examples of nobles arming monks are in Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 47–49. The *bakufu* was the military governorship of provinces (literally, "tent government"). Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 50.

ers.” Temple records indicate that the clergy was not a homogeneous group, but rather divided into three categories: upper (learned monks), middle (administrators and attendants), and lower (menial workers and “residential retainers”), who frequently kept secular names and wives. This setup suggests the possibility that the armed men reported by chronicles may not have been “full-fledged monks” but rather “monastic employees.” Some temples engaged secular armed men also in times of peace to serve as guards, and at times monks ventured outside to “find armed allies.” It seems that, at the time, a wide range of people carried arms, including some who served monasteries. Some were secular professionals and skilled (*dōshu*), and assigned to defend temple estates, while others were less skilled monastic workers (*jinnin*) that lived and worked within the compounds.⁸³

Given that the non-clerical ranking nobles who recorded events refer to all these people collectively as “clergy” (*daishu* or *shuto*), there seems to have been a general unfamiliarity with temple personnel. The alienation of monastics was aggravated in the fourteenth century, when a radical change in the political situation occurred with the establishment of the Ashikaga *bakufu* and the rise of the warrior class, which soon came to be in control. By the mid-1300s the *bakufu* had reduced the revenues of monasteries by controlling their tax collection and in the religious sphere the Ashikaga leadership abandoned dependence on established schools to promote Zen Buddhism. Reliance on military might meant also less reliance on status, so that lower social classes could “challenge their lords in an unprecedented manner.” Rogue bands of armed farmers, merchants, and warriors would form, while the new military leaders (*daimyō*) had no religious training or responsibilities, and their social status now was tied to “military performance” alone. As a consequence Buddhist claims to defend the state became less common and “references to the mutual dependence of the imperial and Buddhist laws had nearly disappeared.” Temples lost their privileges and “had little to offer warriors by way of assistance.”⁸⁴

There is still mention of *sōhei* engaged in battles in the century between the 1470s and 1570s. But then, the reforms of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), who was de-facto ruler since 1582 but never attained the title of shogun, aimed at disarming the population except for the *bushi*, separating social groups into rigidly

⁸³ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 58–74.

⁸⁴ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 52–55. Zen schools were introduced in the early years of the Kamakura *bakufu* (1192–1333). Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 21. Perhaps surprisingly, most *sōhei* were recruited from the pietistic Amidist school, not the Zen schools. Apparently, the latter limited their martial role to theory, influencing the art and techniques of fighting, but without taking active part in the power struggles. Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 128–34. This fact may explain their favor with the ruling military caste.

separate social classes, samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. He accomplished this with the “sword hunt” of 1588, the destruction of fortified castles, and severe punishment for crossing class barriers. His reforms prepared the way for the stability of the Tokugawa shogunate that followed.⁸⁵ At this time, after warfare centered more and more on clashes of large armies, the warrior class established several schools of martial arts, especially around Kyoto, where young nobles could be trained in “skills that could elevate them above the status of menial soldiers [as] part of a package of constructed cultural traditions.” Some monasteries also “attempted to establish their own niches in this trade, but this effort seems to have been a business decision . . . not based on ancient martial traditions . . . despite later claims to that effect.” One of those centers was in a small monastery in Nara, part of the Kōfukuji complex, which was able “to market itself as a center of expertise in spear handling, becoming the best-known monastic martial arts center” from the mid-sixteenth century thanks to its founder, an expert in that art who had wandered the country improving his skills.⁸⁶

In the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) the *sōhei* image became more consistent and uniform in order to further dissociate it from that of the new culturally dominant *bushi*. In general, “*sōhei* types appear most frequently in sources critical of the military, financial, and political power of the old monastic centers, or in works far removed in time from the events they recount,” to appeal to the new leadership of warrior-aristocrats.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the same period witnesses yet another oddity in the relation between monastics and military authorities. Travel within Japan had never been free, and travelers could be stopped and questioned (for example, pilgrims, monks, and nuns had to carry documents justifying their wanderings). The rule was particularly enforced in the Tokugawa period, when Japan became a true “police state.” But among the few who could move around freely were the *komuso*, monks of the Zen Buddhist school called *Fuke*, which apparently had its origins back in the thirteenth century. Its members carried weapons and wore clothes that distinguished them from members of more conventional sects, in particular a large basket-shaped headgear that completely covered their faces, and wandered about playing a bamboo flute in complete freedom, being answerable only to the shogunate. Many of them were of *bushi* stock and some may have been employed by the *bakufu* as spies who could freely infiltrate local organizations. Many masterless samurai (called *ronin*) joined the

⁸⁵ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 141–45. The shogun was the hereditary commander-in-chief and de-facto supreme authority of feudal Japan.

⁸⁶ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 140–41.

⁸⁷ Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 137, 143.

komuso among whom they were allowed to carry arms and preserve anonymity, being only known by their religious name. The *komuso* may also have formed secret societies “involved in the criminal urban subculture.”⁸⁸

As Catharina Blomberg explains, in Japanese thought there has always been an odd coexistence of warring and religious imagery (not unlike some Christian icons such as Saint Michael). For example, the Shintō *kami* most revered among *bushi* was the God of War Hachiman. At the time of the two unsuccessful Mongol attacks against Japan in 1274 and 1281 he was reputed as having played a key role in sending the saving typhoons that destroyed the invading fleets. But he was also venerated both as a bodhisattva and as a manifestation of Amida Buddha, the most popular incarnation of a Buddha revered by the “pietistic Jodo schools.” There is an “entire pantheon of minor Buddhist deities” depicted in armor and carrying swords to defend the faith, among whom the rather “feminine-looking” benevolent bodhisattva of Mercy Kannon. And the entrance to Buddhist temples is guarded by deities armed with clubs and swords and in threatening postures. The reverse imagery is also present: the bodhisattva Jizo, protector of dead children, is depicted as a shaven-head monk with staff and rosary, but at other times as a *sōhei* on horseback.⁸⁹

The conclusion that can be reached from all this material from Asia is that monastic martial activities were generally tolerated and even admired when associated with spiritual practices and disconnected from actual intervention in wars, but that in the latter case they enjoyed a decidedly more uneven reception. The more intriguing cultural attitude is, of course, the one that invests spiritual significance on such a ritualized physical activity. It would be valuable to find a clue as to whether and how such ideas found transmission to the West in the course of the Middle Ages to supply inspiration for the vocation of de La Sale’s abbot.

⁸⁸ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 101–03. There were over 50,000 *ronin* after 1600.

⁸⁹ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 23–32. A modern equivalent of this “mixed” iconography is the figure of Friar Tuck, who has entered the modern world of entertainment as a jolly, plump friar. His real origins are less gentle. The name appears in two royal writs of 1417 and a letter of 1429. The writs record that a man called Friar Tuck had gathered a number of bandits, who had committed murders and robberies, and threatened the inhabitants of Sussex and Surrey. There they had hunted without license, burnt the lodges of the foresters and warreners and threatened them “in life and limb.” Men were commissioned to arrest him and his associates, but he was still at large in 1429. “By then it was known that his real name was Robert Stafford and that he was chaplain of Lindfield, Sussex.” Apparently, the men who drafted the writs of 1417 had never heard of Friar Tuck before, so the legend of him started after that time. His incorporation into the Robin Hood legend is first recorded in a short fragment of a play dated 1475. Holt, *Robin Hood* (see note 14), 58–59.

Unfortunately, the most obvious source, Marco Polo, is not much help. In the two short chapters of his memoirs in which he mentions monastic institutions in central and eastern Asia he does not seem to be aware of these practices, or perhaps he thought such humble topic unworthy of comments.⁹⁰

This leads to the possibility of an autochthonous phenomenon taking root in various countries during a period spanning over a millennium. Under the right circumstances, in the East as well as in the West, monks apparently did engage in martial activities, whether this was in conformance to the practice and expectations of normative society (as in the case of military orders in the West and the Shaolin monks in China) or against them (as in the case of *sōhei* in Japan and monks leading rebellions in Russia), only to be pushed aside when either the state became strong enough to rely on its own forces (as in Ming China) or when a professional warrior caste felt threatened by their activities (as in Japan). It seems also that the closer the contact between general population and monastics, the greater the chance of military involvement by the latter. It should be added that the distinction between practice of one-on-one combat with or without weapons and warlike activities proper is not too critical in this context, given that the former was usually preparation for the latter and the product of the same culture. The blurring between the two is particularly evident in Japan, where de La Sale's abbot might have been considered a master in his specialty and trained disciples in his favorite techniques.

Perhaps not fortuitously, as warriors were putting monks in their place a parallel phenomenon was taking place, equally observed in the East and West: the assumption of religious dimension by martial organizations. In Europe monastic military orders were supplanted in the late Middle Ages by chivalric orders founded by princes, such as the Garter, Toison d'Or, Porcupine, and so on. Those new orders retained a religious veneer (for example, they celebrated masses at their periodic reunions), but were effectively secular clubs with a political purpose, as the aristocracy replaced with its own pageantry of cohesion the fervid, militant spirit of the crusades. The wars of the late Middle Ages were far from being the "holy wars" of the preceding centuries against Islam and heresies. The crusading spirit had died, and while princes still talked a lot about crusades,

⁹⁰ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo the Venetian*, intr. John Masefield (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1958). Both are in Book I. In chapter X (I: 49) he mentions the pious practices and artisanal activities of the monks of St. Barsamo in Armenia. However, Vincent of Beauvais (*Speculum Historiale*, Lib. XXX. c. cxlii) supplies the (brief but more significant) information that its three hundred residents were capable of defending their monastery against any attack. Polo's second mention of is in chapter LVII (I: 150–51), a brief survey of Tibetan monks and their customs, without mentioning warring activities.

they usually did little or nothing except for occasional participation in limited expeditions against the Turks.⁹¹

It is perhaps not coincidental that, while the dominance of monastic military orders started to draw negative attention, the sacralization of the warrior found a ready medium in the voluminous chivalric literature of high- and late-medieval Europe, for example in the notorious legend of the Grail within the Arthurian Vulgate cycle. Here the sacred vessel, whose nebulous origins are narrated in lofty religious tones, becomes the possession of Joseph of Arimathea, who is exalted as a knight, and whose adventures as founder of illustrious lineage in the British Isles has clear biblical and epical overtones.⁹² The quest to re-discover the Grail falls to Galahad, the adolescent knight whose chastity renders him acceptable to more experienced members of the Round Table. Galahad's monastic virtues (implied rather than explicitly described) make him the one worthy of gazing upon the vessel in its full magical splendor, and then only at the moment of his own death, when the knight's purity has no chance of future contamination. Galahad is the perfect monkish warrior, the mirror image of the warrior monk, dedicated to an otherworldly mission and destined to be sacrificed in an act of mystical revelation. Whatever the purpose of this late addition to the Arthurian legend in the mind of its writer(s), it became quite popular among contemporaries of de La Sale.⁹³

The mentality of Japanese warriors underwent a similar evolution. With the new stability brought about by the Tokugawa shogunate the rules of a chivalric code called Bushido were codified, spelling the duties and privileges of the samurai class as part of a new rigid social order.⁹⁴ The term Bushido (Way of the

91 See, for example, the famous banquet of the Vow of the Pheasant, an extravagant feast organized by Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy in 1454 as stage for a mass pledge for a crusade among the guests. Olivier, de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, ed. Henri Beune and J. d'Arbaumont, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1883), 2:348–80. The only outcome of the lavish affair was a puny expedition, soon aborted for political reasons, led by his eldest illegitimate son Antoine. Chastellain, “Chronique” (see note 38), 5: 52–64. The duke's own father had participated in the disastrous battle of Nicopolis (1396), which marks a watershed in western involvement against the Ottoman Turks. Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless: the Growth of Burgundian Power* (1966; Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 4.

92 “The History of the Holy Grail,” trans. Carol J. Chase, *The Lancelot-Grail Reader*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 2000), 4–47.

93 “The Quest for the Holy Grail,” trans. E. Jane Burns, *The Lancelot-Grail Reader*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 2000), 306–63.

94 Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 91–92. She cautions against seeing too many similarities between the feudal systems in West Europe and Japan. Despite superficial similarities, in Japan the feudal contract was lacking, replaced by absolute, hereditary obedience to one's lord, who owned the life of the vassal. Another difference was that Bushido lacked the

Warrior), was first used by the Neo-Confucian Yamaga Soko (1622–1685). It was accompanied by “a bias for ornate armor, use of family crest, and abundance of precious metals and clothes,” in imitation of the earlier courtiers of the Heian period (and—one could add—like Western contemporaries of the knightly class). Many a *bushi* writer described the mission of the warrior in religious if not mystical terms. One writer expressed a mixture of admiration and commiseration for the “uncompromising rigidity” of *bushi* ethical code, regardless of the suffering (reminiscent of early Christian hagiographers). Another discouraged the *bushi* from developing close friendships as he should only owe total loyalty to his lord, a precept evocative of western monastic rules.⁹⁵ The Neo-Confucian writer Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725) recalled how his eighty-year-old father, who had taken the tonsure in old age, disarmed a drunk who threatened people with a sword inside the temple, then calmly returned to his cell. Even before taking his vows he had been an ascetic, taciturn man full of wisdom, who taught his son to endure hardships, dismiss from his mind greed and lust, and keep his emotions strictly under control. His manners were always imposing and yet humble, as he swept his room and arranged flowers by himself, or sat in contemplation. In this “true Confucian scholar-gentleman” one may well recognize a monastic ideal.⁹⁶ In fact, it was not unusual for a *bushi*, a professional trained to kill, to take the tonsure late in life to atone for his sins against both Buddhist and Shintō precepts.⁹⁷

Nothing illustrates the “sacralization” of the Japanese warrior like the forging of his swords, a complicated process invested with religious significance. Women, considered impure during menstruation, were not allowed within the precinct of the smithy. The smith, whose status was higher than that of other artisans (there are also accounts of emperors forging swords with their own hands), would practice fasting, sexual abstinence, and prayer for days before the task. Then, during the process of forging, he would don court robes or the robe of a Shintō priest and invoke divine help, for example, utter the name of Amida Buddha with each stroke of the hammer. Swords were given names, treasured as heirlooms, and tested on corpses or living passers-by (even if this practice was illegal). The first treatises on sword-fighting techniques were written during the early part of the Tokugawa *bakufu* and were strongly influenced by Zen Buddhist ideas, which had exerted an immediate appeal for the *bushi* since their introduction. Among them,

concepts of protecting widow and orphan and of gallant behavior toward women. Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 106.

⁹⁵ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 105, 110, 166.

⁹⁶ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 184–85.

⁹⁷ Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 115.

a very important precept was that of striving for *fudoshin* (immobility of the heart or coolness of mind). Technical skills were to be accompanied by the right mental attitude: constant awareness, “emptiness,” and inner clarity. Like the practitioner of Chinese martial arts, the Japanese warrior had to train and apply mental discipline until he could go beyond training and act instinctively.⁹⁸

In China, as Buddhism continued its slow decline during the Ming and Manchu periods, some monastic functions were assumed by various secret societies, which met stealthily at night to chant, pray, and practiced fighting techniques. Governments were equivocal toward these societies: they would at times make use of such a body of trained fighters but at other times suppress them as too dangerous, just as they had acted ambiguously toward the monks of Shaolin, celebrated as warriors while they were useful in this role, but once the danger was past, forced to choose between incorporation into the state machinery and ostracism or overt persecution. This ambiguity was compounded by the fact that government officials were in general Confucians and disliked Taoists and Buddhists, and that they viewed these cultural institutions also as havens of “rebellious sentiments and subversive activities.”⁹⁹

Probably the most grotesque appropriation of monastic prerogatives is that of the *oprichniki* created by Ivan IV: a body of several thousand “avenging angels” who sowed terror around Muscovy where they abandoned themselves to killing, pillage, and rape,

mixing hours of prayer each day with frequent whipping, beating, and murder of Ivan’s opponents. Combining piety with debauchery, the *oprichniki* would sit quietly at meals while the tsar himself read from the *Lives of the Saints*. Having eaten, they would then tear across the land on their huge warhorses, making martyrs of innocents, peasants and aristocrats alike.¹⁰⁰

In particular, the “semimonastic garb” (black robes and a hood) of these sinners deeply offended Filipp, once abbot of Solovki and since 1566 metropolitan of Moscow, who remonstrated with the tsar and even denied him his blessing for the transgression.¹⁰¹

98 Blomberg, *Heart of the Warrior* (see note 77), 52, 54–57, 68–70. The connection of swords with Buddhism goes back to ideas of the sword as protection against evil, discussed earlier in this section.

99 Reid and Croucher, *Way of the Warrior* (see note 5), 66–67.

100 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 48.

101 Robson, *Solovki* (see note 4), 51. This act would eventually cost him his life. For the complete story of Filipp, see Bushkovitch, “Saint Filipp” (see note 3), 37–41.

These examples suggest a thin and rather porous boundary between monastic and martial mentalities. Since this concept may not appear obvious at first, especially in the medieval West, it may be appropriate to start by evaluating monasticism as cross-cultural phenomenon. While monasticism displays a great deal of uniformity across cultures (more so than chivalry), only seldom has it been examined from a global viewpoint. The work of Livia Kohn on monastic Daoism (Taoism) includes a survey of scholarship on the topic of monasticism in general, which she divides into three categories: historical, that is a narrative of events; spiritual, that is a discussion in terms of religious experience (and therefore not dwelling on it as a cross-cultural institution); and sociological, that focuses on its (usually contemporary) “communal dimension.”¹⁰²

Among the handful of authors who discuss monasticism as a global phenomenon, Mark Juergensmeyer lists four characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of religious life: individual impulse to seek a higher life through spiritual practice; separation from normative society; coming together of like-minded individuals of the same sex “to create a family-type bond among themselves while rejecting common family ties and feelings”; and “an alternative to ordinary society . . . with its own ritual, rules, and schedules.”¹⁰³ Other characteristics, evident in both ancient Theravada Buddhism and medieval Catholicism include: marginal position in relation to society and negation of society values; conservative, idealistic nature; and “fragility and precariousness, manifest in a set of inherent tensions” between insulation from and involvement with normative society. The last characteristic has been a contributor to its survival, as monasteries repaid society for its support and donations in several ways: by acting as mediators and “bastions of stability” in a world at war and a “safety valve for society” by helping

¹⁰² Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 2.

¹⁰³ *Monastic Life in the Christian and Hindu Traditions: a Comparative Study*, ed. Vasudha Narayanan and Austin B. Creel. Studies in Comparative Religion, 3 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 551, 553, 556. Cited in Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 3–5. She lists ten features of monastic life that are in common to the Rule of St. Benedict and other orders and cultures: solitude (separation from the world and preference for silence); discretion (moderation in all things, avoidance of excesses); compunction (awareness of own deficiencies and those of the world and repentance for past deeds); humility (renunciation of personal pride, acceptance of patience, perseverance, submission to rule); asceticism (mortification of inner tendencies that remove from the divine, detachment from vices, passion); poverty (total dependence on the charity of others, renunciation of material good); virginity (chastity or continence, sublimation of sexual feelings, modesty, avoidance of temptations); obedience (crucifixion of self-will, complete surrender to the will of the abbot and institution); stability (establishment of a “permanent abode and stable relationships”); work (undertake community tasks with dignity). Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 5–6.

the poor and the sick and educating children.¹⁰⁴ To which one could add, based on prior examples, occasionally supplying military help.

The psycho-social aspect of monasticism is particularly significant in understanding the issue at hand. Monasteries transform their members to fit the new image by centralizing and controlling every aspect of their lives: labor, property, food, sex (through celibacy or arranged marriages). They replace social distinctions and special relationships with “overall uniformity and commonality” and yet provide a level of intimacy that contrasts with the loneliness of “ordinary society.” Their highest value is placed on group cohesion, and commitment, which are achieved by three means much as in “prisons and military camps,” namely abstinence (from intoxicants and rich food, sexuality, personal adornments, entertainment) thus freeing energy for work and community chores; austerity (practice of poverty and hard work), which provides “a sense of shared struggle and common purpose”; and investment (feeling of irreversibility and isolation from the world) through “harsh initiatory tests and binding procedures, and threats of shame and punishment for straying from the fold.”¹⁰⁵

The internalization of monastic values is somewhat analogous to the acquisition of an esprit de corps within military institutions. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the transition from eremitic to coenobitic life in the West occurred with St. Pachomius (286–346), who was “originally a military man used to hierarchy and discipline.” He created the first Christian monastic rule based on a one-year to three-year novitiate, daily schedule of work and worship, cleanliness, personal discipline, and community interaction.¹⁰⁶ In a relatively short course, the resulting institution was a group of like-minded individuals (usually) of the same gender living in communities that enforced member cohesion through a process of initiation, and then through a pattern of usually demanding rituals, distinctive habit, code of behavior, and special diet, all means that proclaimed its separation from normative society. Paradoxically, this regimentation was achieved from the convergence of two improbable drives, one revolutionary and the other extremely individualistic. The first originated in a movement led by a charismatic leader (such as the Buddha and Christ) who had gathered disciples with the exhortation to abandon their homes, families, social rank, and possessions to follow him toward a personal salvation. This message effectively demanded disobedience to

104 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 12–13.

105 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 13–14.

106 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 24.

an earthly authority as the prerequisite for obedience to a higher one.¹⁰⁷ The other component came from a preexisting eremitic impulse that was originally associated with shamanism. Ascetic withdrawal from the world is not peculiar to Christianity or Buddhism. “Judaism, which is not conspicuously ascetical in its ethos, had its Essene tradition . . . a Jewish ascetical settlement at the time of Christ that displayed many characteristics of a later Christian monastery.” There was also an ascetic classical tradition of Stoicism and Neo-Platonism, “which counseled the man who aspired to perfect wisdom to avoid the distractions of marriage and social intercourse and live the life of a recluse.”

In the Roman Empire many early Christian congregations contained ascetics of both sexes who devoted their life to prayer in constant readiness for the “second coming of the Lord” and the hour of judgment. Before Constantine, this spirit was kept alive by the periodic persecutions and the “very real possibility of martyrdom.” But after this era passed, monks came to be the new “heroes of the faith.”¹⁰⁸ In the words of Jaroslav Pelikan, “monks began by patterning themselves after Christ. But by the time they were finished they were likewise patterning Christ after themselves.”¹⁰⁹ In this culture monasticism was a continuation of the secluded life of early Christians at the fringes of society, a kind of replacement for early martyrdom within a society where Christianity was now dominant.

Another paradox of monasticism is that it succeeded despite its defiance of societal norms. Not unlike warriors, dedicated to an activity (killing) not sanctioned by the social order, monastics established themselves within societies that strongly condemned disdain of hierarchy and abandonment of one’s family, such as pre-Christian Rome and Confucian China. And yet, their members came

107 The origin of Christian monastic orders is recorded by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles [Acts 2:41–6]. Giles Constable, *Three Treatises from Bec on the Nature of Monastic Life* (Toronto and Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 30–31.

108 C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Longman, 1984), 2–3. Originally, hermits were reputed to possess shamanic powers that could benefit the entire community. This solitary tendency “led first to loose assemblies of hermits, then to organized and often large communities.” Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 1.

109 Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 110. Quoted in Constable, *Three Studies* (see note 19), 185–86. The attraction of martyrdom was so strong that many early medieval saints mortified their bodies “out of a desire to suffer with and die for Christ” and Bede compared monastic tonsure to the crown of thorns. Gilbert Foliot wrote to a friend who had recently become a Cistercian, that he was undertaking a life of “[r]ough clothing, unprepared food, a hard bed, manual labour, harshness of discipline, [and] continual silence,” a suffering that represents the “nails of the Saviour.” Constable, *Three Studies* (see note 19), 198–99, 212.

together to form a durable—if artificial—family. As W. W. Meissner explains, religious communities share characteristics with familial-communal types of organizations in their relatively small number of adherents, frequent face-to-face contacts among members, sense of solidarity to the group, similarity of values, relative permanency of location and composition, and relative stability of behavior. On the other hand (like the military), the group has a “basic bureaucratic structure” with highly centralized authority that pushes its members toward conformity, which it achieves through a period of initiation (the novitiate) “accompanied by strong group pressure to change the candidate in the direction of group attitudes and opinions.” Psychologists have shown that “severe initiation into a group tends to increase individuals’ liking for the group,” that is, group members reduce cognitive dissonance by either denying the severity of the initiation or (more commonly) by increasing the attraction of the group by “distorting the perception of group activities.”¹¹⁰ It is not difficult to see the same process at work in the initiation to a society of warriors, such as the investiture of early medieval knights (and late-medieval members of chivalric orders), with its accompanying ritual of prayer, purification, and donning of special clothes and accessories.¹¹¹

110 W. W. Meissner, S.J., *Group Dynamics in the Religious Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 12, 99, 107, 131. See also Luigi M. Rulla, S.J., *Depth Psychology and Vocation: A Psycho-social Perspective* (Rome: Gregorian University Press; Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1971), 257. The argument about group initiation is from E. Aronson & J. Mills “The effect of severity of initiation on liking for a group,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 59 (1959): 177–81. Kohn adds that monastic organizations “have a great deal in common with millenarian movements: homogeneity, equality, anonymity, humility, unselfishness; the absence of property, status, kinship rights and duties; sexual continence (or sexual community), disregard for personal appearance, total obedience to their leader; maximization of religious attitudes and behavior; and acceptance of pain and suffering. Both, in addition, are forms of open society that cut across ethnic, caste, and national divisions.” Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 16.

111 One difference that is notable between the two group types is in the matter of friendship. While members of Western chivalric societies were expected to form friendships, this was not so with monastics. Even when living a communal life in cloisters, personal bonds with fellow monks were not encouraged, but rather replaced by what Meissner calls “a certain atmosphere of formality and mutual respect” and solidarity toward the congregation as a whole. Meissner, *Group Dynamics* (see note 110), 6–7. On the other hand, complete trust for and obedience to a superior was expected, even if lacking the element of fanatical devotion of a *bushi* toward his lord. For examples of monastic bias against friendships, see the Benedictine rule against taking the side of another monk (lxi) or establishing a strict hierarchy of obedience based on seniority (lxxi) at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule2/files/rule2.html> (last accessed on Nov. 14, 2013). Also Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women’s Role in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 18–22. This attitude is by no means confined to medieval settings. For example, Rulla states that the beneficial effects of cohesiveness and consistency in religious organi-

Once established, monastic life would enhance the sense of distinctiveness from normative society by creating its own rite of passage to confirm candidates in their choice of lifestyle, keeping its adherents walled in (in some societies) and separate by wearing a distinct habit, and ritualizing interaction with the outside (for example, going about begging for food), and in general displaying a trend toward self-sufficiency. One of the most distinctive monastic techniques to achieve a sense of togetherness was (and still is) chanting, which exerts a special effect on the mind. As Kohn explains, “the practice of chant is essential to all monastic communities because it has strong powers to balance and harmonize body and spirit. Chanting could be done solo or in chorus” and with different voice levels. It achieves five spiritual effects:

First, chant anchors people by associating specific mental states and memories with certain sounds Second, it provides entrainment through repetition, adjusting body and mind to the rhythm and pattern of the sound. Third, chant involves the breath, encouraging people to breathe deeply and thereby be more aware of their inner selves. Fourth, it has sonic effects as its vibrations impact directly on the energetic patterns of the body. And fifth, chant is a strong carrier of intent, encouraging practitioners to engage their willpower and move toward their goals.”¹¹²

Just like group drilling, it produces a sort of psychological rhythmic bonding (or entrainment) that reinforces solidarity, and could serve as replacement for private conversation, which is not encouraged.¹¹³

Apart from the “reconditioning of behavior and physical activities” another universal theme of monasticism is “the organization of space, the regulation of time, and the practice of the liturgy.” Without the option of ever interrupting the routine, the day of monastics is divided into periods and regulated by a rigid schedule, with activities prescribed for each stage, while the ritual of liturgy (con-

zations is undermined by “vocationally inconsistent cliques or clique-communities, which develop if people choose each other and select their leader and/or if either authoritarian or *lasses-faire* style of leadership is prevailing in the setting.” This can also happen when the group increases in size and therefore decreases in cohesiveness. Rulla, *Depth Psychology* (see note 110), 376.

112 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 178.

113 Merton mentions a Russian monastic custom, apparently derived from a practice at Mt Athos, the so-called ‘Prayer of Jesus,’ consisting of the constant repetition of a short formula in conjunction with rhythmic breathing, approaching the concept of mantra. Merton, *Mystics* (see note 57), 179. See also Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dalai Lama XI, *The World of Tibetan Buddhism: An Overview of Its Philosophy and Practice*, ed. and trans. Geshe Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 120–44.

fession, chanting, and profession of humility) reinforce a common mindset.¹¹⁴ Together they form what Bourdieu called a *habitus*, when “the elementary acts of bodily gymnastics” become

charged with social meaning and values Such disciplined formalities of physical behavior are common in all types of monasticism. They can be seen as a conscious effort at setting the reclusive life apart from ordinary life—reeducating people at the most basic level to create perfection within the limitations of this world.”¹¹⁵

Another point of contact between monastic and military vocation, which has received less notice, is the personality of the coenobitical resident.¹¹⁶ The monastic’s desirable mental makeup rests on discipline, acceptance of absolute obedience, tolerance for physical discomfort, and strong ideology, all traits that naturally reinforce certain tendencies, such the inclination toward uniformity of thought and suspicion toward the outside. It is not too difficult to see how a martial spirit could take root in such environment and among people of this mindset under the right circumstances. Where the sources are lacking, unfortunately, is in clearly defining these circumstances.

For example, it would seem reasonable to expect a certain militarization of Irish monasteries as reaction to Viking raids in Ireland in the eighth through the tenth centuries. However, contemporary Irish sources such as the *Annals of Ulster* report some fighting in the eight century involving monasteries “both as perpetrators and as victims of violence” only in relation to internal dynastic conflicts, while modern scholars talk of relentless attacks by Vikings against the “virtually defenceless monasteries,” resulting in plunder and mass murder of the occupants.¹¹⁷ There is no mention of an organized defensive force within them, as survivors apparently preferred the road of exile to the continent. It is possible that

114 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 199–200. These characteristics are universal but “find expression through unique cultural patterns.”

115 Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 113.

116 From within the tradition of studies on group behavior, popular in the 1960s and 1970s, a significant subset was dedicated to monastic subculture. An example is Charles A. Curran, Ph. D., John I. Nurnberger, M.D., and Sister Annette Walters, C. S., J., *Psychological Dimensions of the Religious Life*. Religious Life in the Modern World, 6 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 1966, which is a psychology manual for members of religious communities.

117 T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 595. Like Adolphson, the author cautions that monasteries housed many laymen, and that these may have been the participants in fighting. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (see note 117), 594. The mention of “defenceless monasteries” is in Máire De Paor and Liam De Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, 1958), 131–32.

the sporadic nature of Viking attacks rendered such organization unpractical, but it is surprising to see no clear information as to efforts in that direction in institutions that had earlier on participated in armed struggles.

In other cases the “militarization” of monastic institution can only be inferred as being caused by external events. For example, at Solovki the degeneration of monks’ behavior seems to be the result of a gradual adaptation to the presence of an army on their grounds. We are not informed on how many of the residents accepted the imposed lifestyle, only that a number of complaints were recorded for what was perceived as widespread misbehavior. A similar situation occurs in the case of the *sōhei*. Numerous documents produced by imperial and regional officials complain of acts of armed rebellion by generic “monks,” without specifying who these individuals were and what provoked their behavior. It takes a considerable effort to rise above facile conclusions and realize that the phenomenon of the *sōhei* was much more complex than misguided belligerence among monastic residents. It was likely forced upon monasteries by a general brutality, and just as likely exaggerated by hostile *bushi* attitudes at a time when they were bent on monopolizing martial activities.

In other cases information is more explicit, but may lend itself to multiple interpretations. For example, a fifth-century Chinese text on monastic discipline forbids monks from carrying arms and from retaliating even in case of murder of one’s parents. This could either be a warning to forestall undesirable behavior that plagued society at large or an admission that arms were in fact present and used in monasteries. Another text explicitly bans Chinese monks and nuns from reading military books, which could be (or not) a veiled admission that such works were of interest to them.¹¹⁸

Likewise, the little that is known of martial activities within the various commanderies (or preceptories) of the religious military orders in the West comes in the form of exception or prohibition. For example, Templar rules excuse members who are engaged in campaigns from the otherwise mandatory attendance to divine offices, and prohibit hunting with bow and crossbow.¹¹⁹ And yet it is a given that in order to attain the level of fighting competency that those warrior monks did achieve (which is not disputed either by contemporary writers

118 Adolphson, *Monastic Warriors* (see note 1), 21. According to written rules codified during the T’ang period Taoist monastics were forbidden, among other things, to ride horses and possess military books. Kohn, *Medieval Daoism* (see note 68), 68.

119 *The Templars: Selected Sources* (see note 21), 34–35, 46–47. Commandery and preceptory were interchangeable terms. Walsh, *Warriors of the Lord* (see note 1), 163. A commandery consisted of a convent and the lands attached to it. Forey, *Military Orders* (see note 2), 148.

or modern scholars) they needed to train often. The fact that sustained training is not explicitly recorded may serve as a warning against making assumptions: something may not be recorded simply because it was implied as the norm.

It is admittedly difficult to overcome the tendency to take to face value the written monastic rules as reflective of the actual daily life of monasteries and even harder to filter through the limited information to determine whether certain “undocumented” activities did take place.¹²⁰ In yet another example of ambiguous data, a study on monastic mortality in Durham in the late fifteenth century shows that monks in that place and period suffered a very high death rate with respect to the general population. It may be argued that this was due to exposure to communicable disease because of communal living. However, this fact alone does not explain why this (sudden?) deterioration in standards. Significantly, in 1454 the prior of Durham complained to the pope that a diet rich in meat (in itself a departure from original rules) and, above all, lack of space for exercise were the causes of poor health among his monks.¹²¹ One can only speculate as to what exercise the prior had in mind, given that “exercise” is not usually listed as a monastic daily activity. But one cannot exclude that wrestling matches could have been part of the desired routine.

Finally, while spirituality is appreciated by academics with its corollary of a life of solitude and study, the same is not true of the intrusion of physicality, especially of a competitive or frankly aggressive nature, into it. This phenomenon may be yet another reason for the general shortage of martial topics within the otherwise rich field of monastic studies. For example, the vast and informative *Buddhism in China* by Kenneth Ch'en, a work of nearly five hundred pages, contains only one paragraph dedicated to the martial practices at Shaolin, and then only at the very end, as part of a brief conclusion dedicated to contributions of Buddhism to Chinese culture in general, where it makes a cameo appearance under the heading of “physical education.” The short mention does not include any reference to the alleged military contribution of the monks of Shaolin in 621 and 1673. Additionally, unlike other topics in the volume, it comes without a list of suggested readings.¹²²

120 As an example of “unofficial activities,” Merton states that Zen Buddhist monks also participate in “occasional recreation in the form of judo wrestling bouts among themselves.” Merton, *Mystics* (see note 57), 230.

121 John Hatcher, A.J. Piper, and David Stone, “Monastic Mortality: Durham Priory, 1395–1529,” *Economic History Review* LIX.4 (2006): 667–87; here 675–83.

122 The lack of scholarly interest on the topic can also be obliquely inferred by the current state of literary critique of de La Sale's work. In the articles cited above and in the works cited by them there are no comments of a historical nature on the abbot's wrestling talents.

In modern times, perhaps thanks to a trend toward specialization, there is less need for monastics to assume warring roles, and so they may have turned away from this “alien” lifestyle. But it is important to recognize that at various times and for multiple reasons the opposite trend could have taken place. Until a better explanation is advanced, then, it may be safe to conclude with the following observations. First, enough sources confirm that martial practices could and did take place among monastic bodies, at least among monks of a certain age group and lower education (for example, Templars, Tibetan ‘dop-dop’, or *sōhei*). Second, most pertinent information comes from outside sources, many of which hostile, for reasons that seem related to cultural attitudes outside the monks’ control: jealousy of secular warriors (Western knights and samurai) or rivalry with competing philosophies and related power groups (Confucianism, Shintō). Third, all three motives for such activities, proposed at the opening of the chapter, appear represented in various cultures and at various times. Martial practices could be an integral part of a specialized monastic mission (Western military orders), an integral form of exercise for the spiritual and mental health of the monastic body (China) or individual monks (late-medieval Europe), or a response to external threats, usually coupled with a precarious political environment that demanded extreme self-reliance (Russia, Japan, and Tibet). And finally, whatever their reason, it is not necessary to judge all martial activities among monastics as indication of a degenerative trend and expect disavowal by normative society. On the contrary, as attested by popular entertainment (the adventures of the warrior monk Benkei or the Kung Fu television series), the figure of the peaceful, unassuming monk who can spring from rapt contemplation to deadly attack has made powerful and lasting impression on the mind of the general public.

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Spirituality in the Late Middle Ages: Affective Piety in the *Pricke of Conscience* H.M. 128

. . . words often allure the heart to think on the Lord. And so when you are at ease, talk to Jesus and say these words. And imagine that he hangs beside you bloody, on the cross. And may he, through his grace, open your heart to his love, and to pity for his pain.

“Wooing of Our Lord,” Sarah McNamer, 26.¹

From the inception of the Church, Christian spirituality has evolved somewhat in tandem with its architectural passage from the eleventh-century Romanesque to the twelfth- to sixteenth-century Gothic styles. Earlier artistic building design was often marked by sturdy construction, round arches and vaults, thick massive walls, domed, low-to-the-ground establishments, and realistic attitudes. A later flowering of sensuous exuberance ushered in the more emotional Gothic style of heavenly-pointed spires. From the twelfth century on, ribbed vaulting, pointed arches, steep roofs, and flying buttresses suggested a more emotionally open, expansive way of meditation and religious experience. For example, early rigid, impassive statuary of the Infant and Madonna, unresponsive to each other, was often now replaced by a more emotionally expressive, smiling, interactive pair. The metamorphosis of somber Romanesque grey stone into dramatic colorful stained glass paralleled the increasingly emotional expressions of spiritual devotion. Arnold Hauser offers the following generalization of Gothic art:

The basic form of Gothic art is juxtaposition. Whether the individual work is made up of several comparatively independent parts or is not analyzable into such parts, whether it is a pictorial or a plastic, an epic or a dramatic representation, it is always the principle of expansion and not of concentration, of co-ordination and not of subordination, of the open sequence and not of the closed geometric form, by which it is dominated. The beholder is, as it were, led through the stages and stations of a journey, and the picture of reality which it reveals is like a panoramic survey, not a one-sided, unified representation, dominated by a single point of view.²

¹ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 26.

² Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, intro. Jonathan Harris (New York: Random House, 1951; London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 1999), 272–73.

The Gothic, then, generates, reveals, and encourages an openness and emotionality not shared by Romanesque architecture. These qualities permeated the religious tradition of the time. As Stephen J. Shoemaker reports,

According to a prevailing view in the study of medieval spirituality in the Latin West, the late eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed a revolution in Christian piety when a new style of devotion, often named ‘affective piety’ or ‘affective spirituality,’ abruptly burst onto the scene. Very much at the centre of this innovative spirituality stood the Virgin Mary, whose unique witness to the events of the Passion emerged as one of the primary vehicles for ‘affective devotion.’³

The thirteenth century ushered in a further new wave of emotionality with the beliefs and practices of monks, particularly Franciscans, whose influence was substantial. Derek Pearsall notes this movement began as early as the twelfth century, concentrating less on the legalistic framework than

... on the debt of love and gratitude that man owed to Christ for his voluntary loving sacrifice on the Cross. The movement was associated with a greater emphasis on the intrinsic value of human feeling—when it was directed toward the right ends—in the theology of St. Bernard. Images of the Crucifixion began to take on a more pathetic air, as Christ’s body, instead of standing four-square with the feet separately nailed on little platforms, slumped realistically from the suspending nails into a poignant S-curve and was then incorporated into more extravagant dramas of grief and pain.⁴

As this affective piety spread over time and space, it also flowered in various forms of spirituality: religion, art, architecture, and literature. Pearsall continues his discussion, noting [l]anguage and images lingered upon this suffering humanity, and the cult of the Virgin, which was not new, was intensified so as to provide a witness of Christ’s tender babyhood (in nativity scenes) and humanity. A Madonna and Child of the pre-Gothic period shows the child seated on the lap of the Virgin but otherwise unattached to her, as she gazes intently before her, out of the picture, regardless of her son, mediating on the mystery of which she is part and the prophecy which has come to pass. . . . In the fourteenth century she becomes more human, radiant with maternal pride, entwining gazes with her son and sometimes visited by even more touching displays of feeling . . . Devotion of this kind, with its debt to the Franciscans, drew in many holy lives in the later Middle Ages.⁵

One of the consequences of this emotional devotion is the establishment of new houses of worship. Gordon Home points out that “[T]he largest number of

³ Stephen J. Shoemaker, “Mary at the Cross, East and West: Maternal Compassion and Affective Piety in the Earliest Life of the Virgin,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 62.2 (2011): 570–606; here 570.

⁴ Derek Pearsall, *Gothic Europe 1200–1450* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 32.

⁵ Pearsall, *Gothic Europe* (see note 4), 37.

chantries existing at one time was about 48. These chapels were not only within the churches but grouped near them and they increased in an amazing fashion in the fourteenth century owing to the emotions caused by the various “Black Deaths” (314). And as David Herlihy suggests, “the many deaths [resulting from the plague] produced a great flood of pious bequests, and many of those benefited poor scholars, future priests, and the institutions that trained them.”⁶

As this affective piety spread over time and space, it also flowered in various forms of spirituality: religion, art, architecture, and literature. Eventually, influenced by the highly emotional tone consequent to the Black Death (1347–1351), religious devotion of the late Middle Ages centered itself on the humanity of Christ from a maternal perspective, and in particular, focused on the graphic, and even Gothic visual representation of His body. Images of death and dying of the common man ravaged by that Black Death drove home the seriousness of sanctity. Stark imagery and chillingly realistic details permeate this devotional literature. The pitiful anguish of the Virgin Mother sorrowing at the foot of the cross touches the maternal heart and furthers this new culture of sorrow. Women were particularly influenced by this new emotionality, as noted by Alfred David and James Simpson in the *Norton Anthology*: “Female readers in particular, who had been excluded from the Latin-based, textual tradition of theology, discovered fertile ground in this tradition of so-called ‘affective’ or ‘emotional piety.’”⁷ Supplicating women such as Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich found devotional satisfaction in the state of prayer. Norman F. Cantor explains the preponderance of piety displayed by certain women in this way:

In England of 1340 . . . there were many dozens of small nunneries that were underfunded (funded by a rich family in the past and then forgotten about), even impoverished (sometimes by mismanagement), and sadly deficient in good food, entertainment, and amenities. This bleak ambience was unrelieved, in spite of the jokes and anecdotes about straying and licentious nuns . . . by the sexual activity that married women and many a rich dowager enjoyed. [The nuns] had to make do with piety alone.⁸

Prayers by both men and women were addressed to the maternal Virgin, whose plight they all affiliated with during the anguish of the Black Death. Rosemary

⁶ David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 69.

⁷ Alfred David and James Simpson, ed. “Christ’s Humanity,” *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. General Editor Stephen Greenblatt. Vol. 1, 8th edition (1962; New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 355–56; here 356.

⁸ Norman F. Cantor, *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made* (New York and London: The Free Press), 2001, 146.

Horrox offers examples of prayers against the plague including “A Prayer Against Pestilence to the Virgin Mary” known as “Stella Celi Extirpavit”:

Star of Heaven, who nourished the Lord and rooted up the plague of death which our first parents planted; may that star now deign to counter the constellation whose strife brings the people the ulcers of a terrible death. O glorious star of the sea, save us from the plague. Hear us: for your son who honours you denies you nothing. Jesus save us, for whom the Virgin Mother prays to you.⁹

Horrox also reports the contents of a 1349 letter from Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Bishop of London, in which he orders

the seven penitential psalms and the litany to be specially recited twice every week in parish churches for the peace of the realm, for the lord king and for the obedience of the people, and the unusual processions around the churches and churchyards to be carried out on the same days, by which means the people, sincerely contemplating the past and present gifts of God, should be better able to serve and please him. And thus those of us who remain alive should pray for the good state of the world, for the lord king, for us and for you, so that God, having mercy on the prayers of the just, should turn away his anger and in response to our prayers show us how to serve him more devotedly.¹⁰

In addition, the Franciscan ideology, particularly empathetic and emotional, was especially useful to those suffering from the effects of the Plague. As Derek Pearsall suggests,

The high Franciscan masterpiece of affective devotion, *The Meditationes Vitae Christi*, (c. 1340), was translated into English (1410) by Nicholas Love, the prior of the recently founded (1396) Carthusian house of Mount Grace in Yorkshire. It was . . . disseminated in 40 or more manuscripts, and was widely influential.¹¹

Other influences were likewise furthering the cult of pietistic devotion at this time as well. George R. Keiser indicates that “A popular subject for works intended to inspire meditative devotions in the Late Middle Ages was the Life of Christ, especially that part known as the Passion. One of the most interesting works of this nature was Nicholas Love’s “Myrroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ,” which was at the time ascribed to Bonaventure.”¹²

⁹ *The Black Death*, ed. and trans. Rosemary Horrox. Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 124.

¹⁰ Horrox, *The Black Death* (see note 9), 119.

¹¹ Pearsall, *Gothic Europe* (see note 4), 202.

¹² George R. Keiser, “Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91: Life and Milieu of the Scribe,” *Studies in Bibliography* 32 (1979): 158–79; here 171. See also Nicholas Love’s “Myrroure of the Blessed Lyf of

Visual, imagistic, highly emotional expressions of death evoking passionate, fervent sentiment coincided with the death experience of the masses and generated their consequent piety. Art works such as Michelangelo's *Pietà* evidence the spirit of compassion. As Susan M. Avery points out,

The purpose of all devotional literature—the instilling of feelings of love, awe, and piety—is to prepare the individual for a more intimate engagement with the divine than he would otherwise be ready to have. This engagement can occur through meditation, contemplation, or mystical encounter with God. Meditation, given its unabashed indulgence in the most emotionally baroque aspects of affective piety, is clearly a type of devotional literature meant to instill love and compassion for Christ.¹³

The Southern Recension of the anonymous *The Pricke of Conscience* concretely displays these emotionally Baroque aspects, the poignant spirituality so commonly encouraged in the later middle ages. The extreme anguish and pity originating in the person of the suffering Christ eventually extends to other forms of passionate and ardent expressions in this “treatise,” albeit with the same intent of stimulating religious fervor. This motive finds its extension in other areas of physicality as well—including meditation on the grotesque and anatomical aspects of humanity, and the traumatic effects of existing in hell. While aspects of fear and dread may not directly lead to emotions of affective piety, they stimulate the psychological nervous system to such a degree that the sinner is traumatized, and may turn to religious bonding with the saints and godhead.

In this sermon of more than 7,300 lines, unabashed emphasis on bodily functions and reactions are common, and provide a tableau of rhetorically stimulating encouragements to virtue, as Howell Chickering so well points out. Of its seven-part structure, six purport to reveal the difficult state of living and dying in the fourteenth century: 1) Man's Wretchedness; 2) Instability of the World; 3) Death; 4) Purgatory; 5) Ten Signs of Doomsday; 6) The Pains of Hell.

The overall strategy of this poetic injunction is to emotionally stimulate, threaten, frighten, and intimidate the layman into proper conduct and sanctified behavior. As Howell Chickering sees it, this is a performative act with a rhetorical

Jesu Christ,” ed. Elizabeth Salter, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 10, general editor James Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1974), especially 17–18; Elizabeth Salter, “The Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's ‘Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesus Christ’ and Related Texts,” *Medieval Prose: Essays on Bibliographical Problems*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards and Derek Brewer (New York: Garland, 1981), 115–28; Michael G. Sargent, *The Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* (New York: Garland, 1992).

¹³ Susan Avery, “Private Passions: The Contemplation of Suffering in Medieval Affective Devotions,” Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NY, 2008, 2.

goal which “tries to persuade its audience of frightening truths about human life on earth and in the hereafter. . . . many passages are explicitly designed to stimulate physical fear (ME. ‘drede’) in the reader or hearer as a first step towards contrition.”¹⁴ The author does so systematically, and unrelentingly, with a series of rhetorical tropes and sensory delineations which paint an often terrifying reality, thus generating the affective piety so often evident in the fourteenth century. These late medieval representations as David and Simpson point out, “accentuate the suffering, sagging, lacerated body of a very human God. In this newly conceived theology, Christ’s suffering humanity takes center stage.”¹⁵

The anonymous author of this “treatise” utilizes passions of pathos and disgust in various ways. First he passionately engages his audience by invoking the miserable condition of mankind, of which they are intimately familiar, and offers two reasons for this state. Man

Ys ymad of mannys wrecchidnesse
 Ffor whan God al þyng had mad of nought
 Than of þe foulest mattere man was wrought
 That was of erthe two skyles [reasons] forto holde
 That on [one] ys for [because] Our Lord it wolde
 Of foule mat(ter) make man as in despyt [scorn]
 Of Lucifer hym ther wyth forto edwyt [reproach]
 That othur skyle [reason] ys this who so kan it se
 For a man schulde the more meke be
 Ever whan he seþ and thenkeþ in his thought
 Of how fowl mater he ys ferst wrought. (f. 4v, ll. 315–32)¹⁶

So one primary intent of this sermon is to instill meekness and humility in readers by acknowledging their disgusting human physicality. To accomplish this, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans point out that “readers must put themselves through a grueling stage-by-stage process . . . [which] begin[s] by inculcating self-disgust and fear and only gradually introduce the possibility of hope in the prospect of heavenly joy.”¹⁷ Such emotion is

14 Howell Chickering, “Rhetorical Stimulus in the *Prick of Conscience*,” *Medieval Paradigms Essays in Honor of Jeremy du Quesnay Adams*, ed. Stephanie Hayes-Healy. Vol. 1. New Middle Ages Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 191–230; here 192.

15 David and Simpson, “Christ’s Humanity” (see note 7), 355.

16 *The Southern Recension of the Pricke of Conscience, Huntington Manuscript 128*, ed. Jean E. Jost (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, forthcoming). Subsequent quotations of this text are taken from this edition.

17 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, ed., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520* (University Park, PA:

the prelude to affective piety, which commiserates with a Redeemer who would save a repellent creature like this with his sacred blood. The audience certainly would have witnessed that foul human matter in the persons of their disintegrating beloved dead, corrupted by the ravaging plague; they would have recognized what they felt was the Devils' rage at losing the place in the universe that man yet possessed; and they no doubt would have experienced the humility of their own physical vulnerability, the repulsive components of their bodies: "What is a man but fowle erthe and clay/And poudre that sone wiþ þe wynd breketh" (f. 5r, ll. 355–56). The author insists that man know the "wrecchidnesse of his owne kynde" (f. 5v, l. 369) from the moment he was conceived to his final disgusting decomposition to keep him humble and beholden to his Lord,

And my modur haþ conceyved me
 In many synnes and meche caytyfte [captivity]

 Ffor there dwelleþ a man in a derk dungeon
 And in a foul stede ful of corrupcyon
 Wherynne he hadde non opur fode
 But wlatu(m) glet and fulthede [disgusting slime] of blode (f. 5v, ll. 390–95)

The sensory experiences of sight, namely darkness, smell, namely foul-smelling corruption, and tactile filth, namely, slimy gore, are powerfully evoked in human birth, as well as the purportedly sinful act which perpetuated his life. The association of infant food—that there is no other but that stinking mass of slimy blood—heightens the repulsion of birth. And in his infancy, man can only "lygge and sprawle and crye and wepe" (f. 6r, l. 409), has no strength or power, as do wild animals, and "After our burþ sorwe and wepyng / To the which our wrecchidnesse steryþ [agitates] us" (f. 6r, ll. 430–31). Meditation on such an origin, an almost frightful, gothic vision of *homo sapiens*, is meant to remind man of his lowly, subservient human condition and his dependence upon God, for he is

Al naked and bryngeþ wyth him no thyng
 Bote a reyme [placenta] that ys fowle and all wlatom [disgusting slime]
 That ys his garnament [garment] whan he schal forthe com
 And that nys but a bloody skyn swyþe [so] þynne
 Where wyþ he is ybore and y wrappyd ynne
 Whan he in his modur wombe lay. (f. 6v, ll. 448–53)

Such highlighting the indignity of man's plight at birth is meant to eliminate pride and compassionately affiliate his condition with that of the suffering Christ,

a rather unique method of achieving unity with the Savior of the human race. That affiliation entails affective piety, the emotional state of connective devotion to the anguished Redeemer.

A man's middle age is no more dignified, however, for his condition is now viewed from another, but equally repulsive perspective, namely

That a man in hys lyf ys no thing ellys
 Bot fowl skyn wlatson [disgusting] to alle men
 And a foul sak full of stynkyng fen [mud]
 And wormes fode that thei schullen have
 Whan he ys dede and y leid in g(ra)ve. (f. 7r, 484–88)

Here the narrator points out the physical repulsion of the human innards which some may ignore or deny by considering the mere surface of white skin. But he contends the essence of mankind is the foulest carrion which will soon be evident.

Ac som men and wem(m)en fayre thei semeth
 To syght wyth oute as many man demeþ [think]
 And thei scheweth [show] nought but the white skyn
 Ac ho [who] so myght openly hem se with yn.
 Ffowler careyne [carrion] myght never non be
 For sothe than me(n) scholde sone on hem see. (f. 7r, ll. 489–94)

Humans fare no better in their middle years than at their birth for this graphic depiction of man's lowliness—disgusting skin, like stinking fen, and as worms' food—further deprecates him, now from tactile and olfactory perspectives. Such extreme presentations of the grotesque commonly affected audiences in this period of high emotionality and vivid images. In contrast, the idealized body of the Savior, first enduring his passion, and ultimately glorified in his Resurrected Body, is a vivid contrast to the realistic properties of a mere human body in all its frailties. Such a comparison enhances the heightened devotion, adoration, and pious sympathy experienced by the sinner, the petitioner, and even the saint at this historic moment.

The repulsive sight of a woman's internal organs follows the loathsome portrayal of middle aged men. Perhaps to dissuade men from sexual attraction to women, as well as to denigrate human beings in general and squelch their pride, the author of this tract characterizes the nature of woman as ugly and disgusting. If only man would look closely at the corporeal state of women beyond the surface, his enchantment would dissipate. The narrator advises that:

. . . lytyl lykyng [desire] schuld a man have
 To be holde a woma(n) othur [or] after her crave.
 Then myght he se wyth oute eny dowte

As wel wyth ynne as he may wyth oute
 And 3if a man sye hure wyth ynne aryght
 Sche were wlatom [disgustiing] for sothe to his syght. (f. 7r, ll. 499–504)

Clearly, the intent is to 1) focus on feminine putridity openly, 2) perceive the revulsion beyond the superficial exterior realistically, 3) deter men from any interest in women physically, and finally 4) humiliate women who consider their own nature psychologically. This is a far cry from identifying with and extolling feminine religious figures such as the Virgin Mary, St. Anne, St. Teresa, for their virtue, religious devotion or goodness; in fact it may be seen as the opposite of Affective Piety. The writer then goes on to castigate men as well in this fashion:

Thus fowl ys eche man wythynne ywys
 Thow he holde him selve of any grete p(ri)s
 Ffor he may eche day here and se
 What he was and is nowe and aftyr schall be.
 Ac a prowde man of this takeþ none hede. (f. 7r, ll. 505–09)

If a man is not humble, he “fareth as do an onresonable beste” (f. 7r, l. 516), and furthermore, if he lacks proper understanding, he is mistaken in his evaluation, and then falsely, illegitimately proud of his manhood. The assumption is that man has denied his disgusting nature, is oblivious of his flaws and weaknesses, but rather considers himself of great value. In fact, the author perceives him as nothing more than an ignorant bestial creature.

Therefore he may be lykned in flesch and bon
 To bestes that reson ne wyt konneth non [know not]. (f. 7r, ll. 522–23)

The advice offered is for any rational man to seek the realistic if grotesque truth by meditating upon his pitiful, wretched nature, neither ignoring nor denying its flawed essence. Again, if such bestial excrescence is highlighted, that rational man is experiencing the antithesis of affective piety: an identification with the loathsome, but a revulsion rather than a sympathy. This is clearly evidenced by the disgusting ooze emanating from his orifices:

Therefore eche man that hath wyt and mynde
 Schulde thenken y wys on his wrecchid kynde [nature]
 And that he is wyth wrecchidnesse y nome [named]
 As al day he may se from his body come
 Bothe from above and from byneþe [beneath] also
 Al manere of felthede rennynge [filthe running] ever mo
 And how fowl he is to mannes syght. (f. 7r, ll. 524–30)

Both visual and tactile sensory details continue to mark the poem with multiple unpleasant bodily excretions running “ever mo.” The narrator’s emphasis is enhanced by the direct address by which he conveys his blatant comments straight to his audience, describing the revolting excretions. Man is not to be loved, pitied or appreciated; his body is not to be extolled or valued, but abhorred and reviled, for:

. . . þorow mowþe [mouth] and nose conynyuelly.
 And þorow othur yssues of thi body
 A fowler matere sye [see] thu never non
 Than ys man that is made of flesch and bon. (f. 7v, ll. 535–38)

Unlike trees or flowers which produce a luxuriously pleasant aroma, man’s aroma is a “fowl and of stynche strong/And al ys wlatsonnesse [repulsiveness] and of no thing elles” (f. 7v, ll. 542–43). Quoting St. Bernard, he states *vilius sterquilinum numquam videres* (f. 7v, l. 530): “you will never behold a more vile dung pit.” While herbs and trees bring sweet savor, man brings nits, lice and other vermin, and other things “that fowl doþ stynke / As fen [mud] and uryñ and foule spat-tyng of drynke” (f. 8r, ll. 556–57). Never would a man both young and light be as stalwart nor comely of shape and lovely of cheer as a tree, for disease would destroy his fairness and strength, making him feeble and wan, ultimately leading him to death’s door.

The state of old age may not directly pertain to the Passion of Christ, but the condition of a man facing death produces a similar emotional shock and compassion. This sermon writer describes evidences of physical and psychological advancing age in these chilling, vivid terms:

Þan(n)e bycometh his kynde [nature] feble and colde
 And than(n)e anon chawngeth his complexio(u)n
 And his maneres torneth [become] in to anothur condycio(u)n
 Ffor than(n)e wexeth his herte hevy and hard
 And his heved [head] feble and every [ever] adonward
 Than(n)e rynclep [wrinkles] his face ev(er) more and more.
 And wexeth [becomes] more fowler than it was byfore. (f. 9r, ll. 645–51)

With his diminished strength and body temperature, altered skin coloring, declining disposition and mood, man becomes hard and petulant, according to the author. He is depressed, has a heavy heart and down-turned head, for seemingly his physical ailments have destroyed his emotional state. A wrinkled and ugly face materializes with time as his brain becomes further obfuscated, and the deterioration continues in this way:

Hys mynde ys schort whan he ouh [anything] thenketh
 His nose droppeth and bloweth . his breth stynketh .
 His sith [sight] wexeth dym and loketh undyr his browe
 His bak croketh and gothe stowpyng lowe
 His eren [ears] wexeth deve [deaf] and hard for to here
 And his tonge in his speche may nat longe duere [endure]. (f. 9r, ll. 652–57)

The combination of maladies the author enumerates is overwhelming, as his forgetfulness, his dripping nose and stinking breath, his dimming eyesight, his sloping posture, his loss of hearing and ability to speak fully incapacitate him further. Jesus on the cross might have experienced bodily changes of temperature, depression (evidenced in the sorrowful statement “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”), a diminution of senses, or a crooked, painful posture. In any event, such detailed physical ailments of the sermon would have evoked recognition and pity in the audience, a softening of heart, and perhaps a resolution to amend their lives. Here the experience of Affective Piety is directed toward humankind as it ages, rather than sympathy for suffering saints, martyrs, or the Divinity. The psychological failings of an old man would have fostered no less compassion in the hearts of these listeners or readers:

He is lyghtly wroth [easily angered] and wexeth al framward
 And hym torne fram wrabe it ys swithe [so] hard.
 He is coveytous and wel hard holdynge
 His chere ys hevy [severe] and fowl and lourynge [louring]
 He prayseth olde men and holdeth hem wyse
 And 3ong [young] men hym lyketh to despyse [despise]
 He is ofte syk and bygynneth for to grone
 And ofte angry and ther of playneth [complains] sone. (f. 7, ll. 658–65)

The aged man easily suffers from anger from which he cannot free himself, a state of covetousness, a harsh, scowling disposition, a belief that only old men are wise, a hatred of youth, and inflamed, groaning complaints of his misery. But the condition of man after his death truly reaches Gothic proportion in the horror and mysterious transformation of a physical corpse. The sensory description of flesh and bones is no longer that of a living being, but of a grotesque extrapolation of what man once was. In particular, the putrid smell is overpoweringly devastating and even dangerous, turning the audience toward the consideration of death.

Than is he but a lytyl erthe and clay
 That torneth [turns] to more corrupcyon al aboute
 Than any stynkyng careyne [carrion] that lyth þer oute
 Ffor the corrupcyon of his body and in eche syde

3if it above the erþe lygge in eny tyde [time]
 Hit myght the eyr [air] so corrupt make
 That men her deþ [death] þerof schulde take
 So stynkyng it is and so vyolent. (f. 10r, ll. 710–17)

Here the odoriferous air of a decaying human being is enough to kill another through its violent putrefaction, clearly a description meant to intimidate and frighten the living, and humble the proud. The emotions of the audience are surely stirred to grief and anguish, but not devotional piety. The words of Innocent III quoted in the text by the author reinforce this gruesome picture:

He saith what thyng may fouler be
 Than mannes careyne [carrion] ys for to se
 And what ys more horrybyle in eny place
 Than ys forto se a ded mannes face
 And whan he is beryed [buried] and in erthe bywonde [shrouded]
 Wormes wol hym gnawe in a lytil stownde [time]
 Ffor to al his flesh be clene away bete. (f. 10r, ll. 720–26)

The poet presents the sight of a passive, eerily unresponsive human face first above ground, but subsequently shrouded in earth's mounds; here worms and asps eat away the once-sacred person, now a mere cadaver, until no flesh remains. The corruptibility of the human body is both a mystery and a trepidation for the audience recalling the parallel process of Christ—on the cross, if not in the ground. Thus, affective piety is indirectly employed here, as pity for all the dead moves the audience to meditate upon death, and specifically the death of Christ. Since neither emperor, king, knight, kaiser, lord, rich, poor, slave nor free can escape this fatal finale, it behooves all men to prepare their souls for this inevitability, for “He scholde fynde wel lytyl matiere [reason/cause]/To make mery while he here dwelluþ” (f. 10v. ll. 755–56). The sense of dread is powerfully overwhelming.

As St. Bernard reports, after death, man becomes vermin, and then stench.¹⁸ He who is aware of this immanent doom

. . . scholde ioye ev(er) forsake
 And ev(er)e wepe and ever sorowe make
 Ffor who so of a man thanne hadde a syght
 Whan wormes to drawe hym haven outryght
 And gnawen his flesh to the harde bon

¹⁸ Pseudo Bernard, *Patrologia Latina*, 184, col. 490. The Latin reads “Post homine(m) v(er)mis post v(er)mem fetor et horror / Et sic in non homine(m) vertit(ur) omnis homo.”

So grysly [ugly] a syght syhe [saw] he never non
 As he myght yse [see] of hys karkoys y wys. (f. 10v, ll. 761–67)

This process transforms a man into “no man”—by removing his humanity from his corpse—and ends his miserable life on earth. The passage begins with an implicit injunction to listeners to forgo the joys of earth which are transitory, and rather engage in emotional bouts of weeping and sorrow, clear in the knowledge of that humiliating process—being eaten by worms gnawing his flesh. The audience is picturing its rotting, infested carcass, an indicator of his mortal condition. Bernard concludes that the audience may thus see how man is born of his mother in wretchedness, and has implied he never escapes life’s deadly doom. Depicting the trauma of man’s life stimulates audience emotions and empathy, the primary method of stirring man to feel the pain of Christ’s Passion, the fourteenth-century religious obsession driving this sermon. Chickering concludes that the poet achieves “this goal by an obsessive emphasis on bodily suffering, the pains of death, and the tortures of hell . . . by the frequency of their imagery and the repetitive pressure of their rhetoric.”¹⁹

While Part Two of the *Pricke of Conscience* (f. 10v to f.18r) considers the condition and instability of the world in which man lives, it fails to galvanize affective piety as a means to awaken spirituality. Its focus is on the rational rather than the emotional. On the other hand, Part Three which discusses death, “þe most dredful þing that is / In all the world” (f. 18v. ll. 1395–96), excites the imagination, evoking fear, and painful associations. When it specifically presents Christ’s suffering, it encourages devotion and repentance. Indeed, there is no healthy creature alive who is not deeply repulsed by death, escaping it at all opportunity. But presenting the evocative person of Christ himself, the poet summons the specific audience response of pity ensuing from the long-standing association of his misery; this experience is regularly rehearsed by Catholics on Good Friday in the ritual of the fourteen Stations of the Cross, in which each pain of the Redeemer is compassionately highlighted. Here in the text, the reader’s empathy and self-disgust are exacerbated with the realization that the cause of this pain is man’s need for salvation:

Whanne cryst deyde i(n) manhede þat he tok
 Ffor byfore he deyde up on þe rode [cross]
 For drede of deth he swatt [sweat] dropes of blode
 Ffor he wuste [knew] er he to the deþ made his pas [passage]
 What the payne of bodyliche [physical] deþ was. (f. 20, ll. 1510–14)

19 Chickering, “Rhetorical Stimulus” (see note 14), 193.

The physical agony endured by Christ is here compounded by his realization of impending death; this psychological awareness brought further suffering of sweating drops of blood at the knowledge of his passage from earth and its physical pain. The author tells us we may learn from his death:

Than may we knowe þerby ryght wel
 Þat the peyne of deth is hard somdel [somewhat]
 And of the deþ men may thenk wondur
 For al þing it wol to bresten asondur (f. 20r, ll.1515–18)

Christ's pain is here used to evoke affective piety: a dying man hung painfully upon a cross, sweating drops of blood in his dread, aware of his immanent death and its agony, while men are awed by death's bursting everything apart. This splitting, the second reason for fearing death, is likened to the separation of husband and wife, again, very personal emotions generating identification and empathy. The third reason is because the soul must come "Byfore god in flesch and blod at the day of dome" (l. 1548), a fearful anticipation of the faithful still alive. The fourth reason to fear death is that once together, souls shall be together in one company and share each other's pain, effectively doubling it for both. Further, their final separation is even more agonizing given their prior permanent alliance:

Therefore the more her peyne is and her care
 Whan that on shal fro that other fare
 This departyng may be iclepud [called] deþ
 Þaf [that] fleþ al aboute as doth the breth
 Thorow al londys bothe fer and ner
 And spareth no thing that he haþ over power [power over]
 Ffor prayer no for ȝift that any man may ȝive
 Where that deþ cometh he suffreþ no man lyve
 For he ne spareþ ryche, pore, ne lowe
 That he ne reveþ of hem þere lif in a lytyl þorowe
 So deþ haþ no mercy of none kynnes whiȝt [of creatures]. (f. 20v, ll. 1551–61)

The omnipresence of death, its power over all, its mercy to none, its thieving of life, all intimidate the audience, and stir them to an emotional frenzy. Neither poverty, riches, wisdom, nor old age will death reverence. Neither king, pope, bishop, nor prelate will it pity, for "Ful gresly [terrifying] it is to think on [death]" (f. 21r. l. 1610). A man's conscience, grieving for his sins, will suffer not knowing his destination at that sudden, if certain, death. The poet incessantly attempts to make his audience emotionally uncomfortable with the realization of its end, taunting his listeners at every chance. He warns them to be on the watch at all times, for once at the gate of heaven, they are too late since mental aberrations will take over:

Ffor deþ f(ro)m a man his mynde bereveþ [deprives]
 And no kyndly wit [wisdom] w(i)t(h) hym be byleveþ [remains]
 Ffor than he schal fynde suche peyne and drede
 Pat he ne schal þanne thenk in no mysdede [sin]
 But in his peyne and in no þing elles. (f. 22r, ll. 1656–60)

Even his devotions, affiliation with the dying Savior, and resulting affective piety are demolished. Further, this perilous situation not only threatens his mental state but his ability to seek contrition, lacking time, space, and grace, and hence he loses the disposition of his soul for all eternity.

Drede [St. Austyn] saith of deþ whan it assaileþ a man
 Chalangeth the soule and makeþ þe bodi wan
 So that him lusteþ þan(n)e to have no thouȝt
 Of his synnes that he haþ here iwrouȝt

 Ffor siknesse ofte tymes pyneþ a man so
 Pat for gret siknesse his mynd passeþ hi(m) fro. (f. 22r, ll. 1663–66, 1673–74)

The poet concludes that from his birth, man travels toward his death, flesh and bone gnawed by such diverse evils as distress, sickness, and death throes. Then, the anxiety of where he will spend eternity takes over. Yet another apprehension at death is the appearance of devils, “þe gresly sight of many fendes” (24 r. l. 1837), when man is near death and thus physically and emotionally vulnerable:

Ffor whan the lif of a man heere is in dowte
 Pan wolleþ develes come hym faste abowte
 To ravaische with hem the poore sowle away
 To þe pyne of helle for þat is her pray
 Ffor as wode lions thei schulle þan fare
 And raunpe on hym and grysly greuve and scare
 And grymly on hem grone and her tonges blere –
 And wyth hidoȝ [hideous] lokynge hem sore afere
 And so thei wolleþ stonde stille at his endynge. (f. 24r–24v, ll. 1841–49)

The hateful, destructive devils hurting man and generating fear is the converse of the loveable, saving divinity and saints furthering salvation through engendering Affective Piety. The author’s purpose in depicting these monsters is to terrify his audience, so they fear the moment of death. The devils’ threats and the hideous sites of horror which they present are intimidating,

For þei beþ into so horrible sight icast
 And so hardi a man was ȝet nev(er) non
 Pat leved in erþe in flesch and bon

That if he sije a devil in his figure aright
 He schulde for drede of þat foule sight
 Wel sone die or elles leose his wit. (f. 25r, ll. 1918–23)

These devils, once angels but now horribly disfigured and disgusting for committing the sin of pride, were stained by their own cunning. Their gruesome, death-inspiring appearance stimulates fearful emotions of readers, paving the way for further sympathy for their Redeemer. The fiend's function is to contend with the good angels for the soul of the dying:

Thei shulleþ þane despute of al our lif
 Wyþ much discord and also gret strif. (f. 26r, ll. 1974–75)

The moment of that judgment, the “harde rekenynge” (f. 26v, l. 2004), wherein the dying must reveal every secret sin and private abomination leads to the final reason men fear death: the unknown determination of their future existence, a harrowing experience. Since all his good deeds are merely seen “As a cloþ defouled with a thyng unclene” (f. 26v, 2031), the bitter anxiety of their fate is beyond comprehension.

Part Six, The Pains of Hell, carries on that apprehension and dread stimulating the response of affective piety—to turn to a merciful God for a reprieve from misery and attainment of salvation while still on this earth. Eternal Hell, located in the core of the earth, is deemed beyond human enduring. In sympathy for Christ's death, the author claims

. . . two children that out come of symones rote [Simon's roots]
 The which careyne and lentheryne [Caryn and Lentyn] were ihote
 Whan that crist diede on the rode
 Thei aysen from the dep in flesch and in blod. (f. 70r, ll. 5438–41)

Thus affective piety is here felt not merely by the audience but presumably by these children called back from the dead. The author continues to enumerate fifteen pains undergone by those in Hell, beginning with the heat of the fires burning throughout, as any human experiencing fire would understand. In contrast, the second pain is of extreme cold,

. . . so strong and so kene
 That they the moste roch [rock] that may owher bisene .
 Oper the moste montayn that is in any londe
 Pere al at ones turned into a fury bronde. [fiery brand]
 And amyddes thulke cold were set on
 3ut it scholde frese and torne into ys [ice] anon
 And fendes hem schullen from that fury take

And caste hem into cold tyl they bigynne to quake
 And þanne drawe hem into þe fuyr bifore þe fendes face
 Thus schul þey hem caste evere to and fro
 And wiþ outen ende hem pyne so. (ff. 70v–71r, ll. 5486–96)

Additionally, hell is filled with “felþe and stynkþe,” a great stench from a fire so great that it may never be quenched because it is sitting in a hole in which the fire burns. Pitch and brimstone spew from the flames where fiends rejoice in their folly and in the filth of lechery.

The fourth pain of hell is strong hunger that sinful men must experience,

For eche day in elle [hell] it wexeþ more and more
 And þat hard hongor schal hem so harde chace
 Þat her owne flesch þei schullen al to race
 And þei schul coveite for hongor it to ete
 For þei schul þere to hem wynne non oþur mete
 So that for hungur þey schul bicom a brayn wod [frenzied]
 For þe hard deþ schal be all her fod
 And þei schull ben fed wiþ þe hard depes stounde [hour]. (f. 71v, ll. 5538–45)

Such agony, both physical hunger and the resulting mental madness, is expected to generate more emotionality in the reader, both to prevent sin and more closely connect the audience to the dying figure of Christ. The ultimate goal is to encourage pity, and hence devotional piety.

Next is the great thirst that afflicts those in hell, so much

Þat her heortes schulleþ ichined [burst open] be
 And þe flamme of fuyr schulleþ drynke
 Medled wiþ bremston that foule schal stynke
 And wiþ oþur smokes of fuyr and wyndes blaste
 And wiþ oþur stormes that evere schal laste
 The whiche schulleþ þanne to gidre mete. (f. 72r, ll. 5571–76)

Quenching one's thirst with flames, brimstone, smoke, wind, and storms appears irrational, and reveals the degree of desperation these souls experience. Perhaps more repulsive is drinking the gall of dragons and sucking the venom of adders' heads—the only liquid available to them—til “her herte shal brenne as cole wiþ ynne” (f. 72r, l. 5593). The sixth pain is the everlasting wicked darkness in which the sinful grope and feel about in the fire that gives no light—the sprinkled sparkles reveal only pain and anguish. Here in the hideous depth must those who “evere loved derknesse of synne and strif” (f. 72v, 5640) ever dwell in that darkness. The seventh pain of hell is the threatening presence of the devils:

Pat sight schul be so foul and hidous to se
 That all men that evere were in cristiente
 Cowþe nought now þorow wit ymagyne aright
 Ne descryve by no wey so hidous a sight. (f. 73r, ll. 5650–53)

No wit of man might endure this face-to-face encounter without dolefully crying, recalling that on earth they followed these devil-faces in their evil. Their tears will never cease or slacken. The eighth pain:

Ys the horrible sight of vermyn venemous
 And of foule dragons and addres swiþe kene
 And oþur foule bestes that beþ foul to mene [mention]
 And alle oþur vermyn that is ful of venym
 And wood [mad] bestes that beþ gresly and grym
 Þe whiche wiþ her teþ schul hem byte
 And alle her lemes wheron þey hadde delite. (f.73v, ll. 5685–91)

Because they defied God's law, beasts and vermin will gnaw their bones with sturdy teeth, dwelling with their victims for all eternity, and "vermyn of helle schal be her clopyng / And wormes schul be her beddyng" (f. 73v, 5720–21). Such frightening and distressing images bring readers back to a devotional posture of piety lest the same torture be inflicted upon them. Their emotions will lead them to a compassion for Christ's suffering, more unwarranted than those of the sinners. Further, another excruciating sorrow is when devils shall beat the sinful with glowing iron hammers like a battering ram on a castle. The victims cannot even faint to escape the misery, but are forever locked into this beating. "Wiþ huge stones, hevy and grete" (f. 74v, l. 5772) the fiends shall endlessly whip the sinful. The final pain is internal, and entails the gnawing of the sinners' consciences because they experience unavoidable guilt for having defied God's commands. Inside them, the worm of conscience eats them up until they cry and scream aloud. Their pride is laid low and they are miserable; in this way they are chided for their offence against their Lord.

The emotionality of this sermon recalls the agony not only of sinners but also of martyrs who died for Christ, and the Passion of Christ himself. The life of Margery Kempe (1393–1413) often epitomizes this kind of spiritual involvement prevalent at the time in a most external fashion. She reports of herself that

. . . afterwards on the twelfth day [of January], when three kings came with their gifts and worshipped our Lord Jesus Christ in his lap, this creature, our lady's handmaiden, beholding the whole process in contemplation, wept marvelously sorely. And when she saw that they wished to take their leave to go home again to their country, she could not bear that they should go from the presence of our Lord, and in her wonder that they wished to leave she cried so grievously that it was amazing [She] sometimes continu[ed] weeping for

two hours and often longer without ceasing when in mind of our Lord's passion, sometimes for her own sin, sometimes for the sin of the people, sometimes for the souls in purgatory, sometimes for those what are in poverty or in any distress, for she wanted to comfort them all.

Sometimes she wept abundantly and violently out of desire for the bliss of heaven and because she was being kept from it for so long.²⁰

Similarly, the sensory religious tract stimulates the reader's emotional responses, and allows for an open receptivity to the spiritual dimension of human existence. As the movement toward affective piety blossoms in the later Middle Ages, perhaps from the increased standard of living of the faithful who have more time to meditate on their afterlives, a greater humanism replaces bare survival.

This discussion sheds new light on the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Southern Recension sermon that at first glance appears highly organized into seven distinct parts, rationally conveyed, rhetorically sophisticated, and pointedly didactic. While these traits well describe the *Pricke of Conscience*, its author likewise evokes a profound sense of passion and even maternal sorrow for pain and suffering—both for the Savior in His passion, and for those who undergo the trauma of living, dying, being judged, and being punished—all with the intention of preventing sin. The culture of emotion pointing to a future Renaissance Humanism has fully permeated the poet's work in an expanded definition of Affective Piety, as it has the artistic endeavors of architects, painters, stonemasons, stained-glass workers, sacristy wood carvers, and the praying public of that time. In this spectacular treatise, then, the author has ushered in a new step toward the Humanism of the Early Modern period on multiple levels, all with a fervent flourish.

20 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1965), 54. See also Sarah Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism: The Medieval Mysticism of Margery Kempe," *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology, and History*, ed. David Aers (Harvester Press: Brighton, UK, 1986; St. Martin's Press: New York, 1986), 34–57; R. C. Ross, "Oral Life, Written Text: The Genesis of *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 226–37; Nancy Partner, "Reading *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Exemplaria* 3 (1991): 29–66; Albrecht Classen, *The Power of a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence Against Women in Premodern Times*. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), ch. 8.

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***Affectus secundam scientiam: Cognitio experimentalis* and Jean Gerson's Psychology of the Whole Person**

Pulcher Alexi decor tuus urget
Gloriosus ut tibi sis, tamen audi.
Te speciosa ligant velut auri
Vincula, retibus et nimis arctis
Stringeris implicitus magis ex quo
Roboris est vegeti caro candens
Passio liberior viget omnis.
Subjuga si ratio tacet excors,
Te fleo nam tua sors miseranda.¹

[Handsome Alexis, your beauty demands / That conceited as you may be, you nevertheless listen. / You will be entwined by the exceedingly confining snares / as though beautiful chains of gold bound you, / for the more flesh shines with healthy vigor / Every passion flourishes more free. / If heartless, reason bound, remains silent, / I weep for you, for your lot is to be pitied.]

In 1395, Jean Gerson (1363–1429) was elevated to the pinnacle of academia with his appointment to the chancellorship of the University of Paris by Benedict XIII. Slightly more than four years later, in June of 1399, with the plague returning to Paris, and manifestly frustrated with university politics, Gerson moved to Bruges where he was dean of Saint Donatian, ostensibly to reform the chapter. There, during a fifteen month period of what amounted to self-imposed exile, he reflected upon his life, his challenges and his failures, considering whether to resign his Parisian position in the face of what he deemed the sterile bickering of scholastic factions within the faculty.²

Having in fact submitted his letter of resignation, he would within months withdraw his request and instead return to Paris at the end of September 1400,

¹ *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Mgr (Palemon) Glorieux, 10 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1960–1973) [henceforth Gl.], 4:175. Citations to the *Opera Omnia*, ed. Louis Ellies Du Pin, 5 vols. (Antwerp, 1706; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1987), will be simply Du Pin followed by volume and column number. These are all my own translations.

² Gerson's self-assessment and complaints are preserved in his own letter, essentially a memorandum, written in early 1400, and appearing in Gl. 2:17–23. For a discussion of that letter, see Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 110–15.

determined to reform the curriculum so as to remedy what he found to be the divorce of theology from spirituality. That goal was reflected in his practical vernacular treatise, *Montaigne de contemplation*, which in some respects can be seen as a prologomenon to his magnum opus, *De theologia mystica*. It is in this latter work that some scholars have identified premises that could be labeled “Gerson’s psychology.”³ The danger of isolating the chancellor’s psychology to that discussion of the powers of the soul, however, is that it tends to limit the applicability of his psychic insights to issues of mystical union. The focus shifts to whether such union occurs through experiential knowledge of God or only through ignorance and unknowing, which question dominated the debate among Dionysians such as Nicholas of Cusa and Vincent of Aggsbach in mid-fifteenth century.⁴ As a consequence, some scholars concentrating on the epistemological issue conclude that Gerson adhered to the view that one cannot love what one does not know.⁵ This paper argues, however, that Gerson’s concern for the relationship between human affective and cognitive capacities in *De Theologia mystica* is a special case of a much more general issue of emotion and reason running throughout his extensive writings, suggesting that the disjunction of love and knowledge both occurs and represents a universal problem in human experience. For Gerson, such disjunction was at the heart of affective disorders, which for the chancellor included not only extreme depression or elation characterizing affective-reaction psychosis, but also personality disorders such as narcissism and obsessive-compulsive behaviors. In order to grasp Gerson’s appreciation of the ubiquity of such disorders, , that is, before considering the schema of the soul he develops in *De theologia mystica*, it may prove useful to examine the chancellor’s characterization of affect as a subject of concern in some of his more humanistic reflective endeavors.

Perhaps it seems strange to commence an analysis of the psychological insights of a late medieval cleric formulated in his treatises on mystical theology with a consideration of his attachment to a classical poet, and yet I would submit there is something revealing in Gerson’s attachment to Virgil transcending the well-worn fascination if not obsession with *l’altissimo poeta*. True, Virgil

3 Brian Patrick McGuire, “Introduction,” *Jean Gerson: Early Works, translated and introduced by Brian Patrick McGuire*, Classics of Western Spirituality, 92 (New York & Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1998), 41.

4 On this debate, see E(dmond) Vansteenberghe, *Autor de la docte ignorance: une controverse sur la théologie mystique au XV^e siècle*, ed. Clemens Baeumker. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 14.2/4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915).

5 This seems to be the case with Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250 – 1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 119–120.

was to the Latin tongue what Shakespeare is to English, and allusions to him are almost inevitable even in Augustine. But without opening the debate on whether the University of Paris, and particularly the College of Navarre during D'Ailly's direction, represented "*le berceau de l'humanisme Français*," in Ouy's phrase (the cradle of the French Humanism),⁶ I think it is possible to reject the suggestion of Pascal Bourgain, a critic of the view that French humanism emerged at Paris in the late fourteenth century, that Gerson lacked an appreciation of Virgil's real artistic achievement. Addressing the poem with which we opened, Bourgain maintains that insofar as Gerson's little verse is a recollection of Virgil, the poem serves merely to emphasize the distance between the medieval theologian, conscious of the subjection of all flesh, and the classical poet, singing in the guise of an amorous shepherd the glories of youthful form.⁷ Bourgain goes so far as to suggest that Gerson was myopic for seeing no deeper, tropological interpretation of the poem—although the general medieval characteristic strategy was to proceed precisely too far in that direction⁸—and Bourgain himself suggests no such interpretation. In fact, the modern interpretation of these early works of Virgil suggests that they are largely devoid of symbolic structure, except perhaps for the arrangement of the ten poems, and that their real significance lies in Virgil's assimilation of empathy and sympathy to high style.⁹ As we will proceed to

6 Gilbert Ouy, "Le College de Navarre, berceau de l'humanisme français," *Actes du 95e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Reims, 1970. Section de philologie et d'histoire jusqu'à 1610*, vol. 1: *Enseignement et vie intellectuelle (IXe–XVIe siècle)* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1975), 1:275–99. See also Franco Simone, *Il Rinascimento Francese: Studi e ricerche*. Biblioteca di Studi Francesi, 1 (Turin: Societa editrice internazionale, 1965); André Combes, *Jean de Montreuil et Le Chancelier Gerson: Contribution a l'histoire des rapports de l'humanisme et de la théologie en France au début du XV^e siècle*. Études de philosophie medievale, XXXII (Paris: J. Vrin, 1942).

7 Pascale Bourgain, "Virgile et la Poésie Latine du bas moyen âge," *Lectures médiévales de Virgile: Actes du colloque organisé par l'école française de Rome (Rome 25–28 octobre 1982)*. Collection de l'école française de Rome, 80 (Rome: L'école française de Rome, 1985), 167–87.

8 On this tendency generally, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: A. Francke, 1948), translated as *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, 36 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953). On the lengths to which moral and allegorical interpretation was taken with the Virgilian corpus, see Domenico Comparetti, *Virgilio nel medio evo* (Livorno: F. Vigo, 1885), translated as *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans. E. F. M. Benecke (New York: MacMillan, 1895), with new introduction by Jan M. Ziolkowski (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton, 1995). Servius advanced an allegorical interpretation of the Second Eclogue in which Corydon represented Virgil, Alexis represented Caesar. *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica Commentarii*, ed. Georgius Thilo (Leipzig, 1887; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), 18–29.

9 See, in particular, Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), Chapter IV.

argue, Gerson's allusions to Virgil imply that he was cognizant of this 'double subjectivity' so integral to the Roman poet's development of psychological narrative, and it was for this very reason that the chancellor found the Virgilian corpus so relevant to his own work. The fact that Gerson's immediate interests and concerns differ from Virgil's is no more relevant to the issue of his appreciation for Virgil than the difference in Virgil's perspective from that of Theocritus obviates his grasp of or indebtedness to the poet whose *Idylls* are the font of the Western bucolic tradition. Nonetheless, Bourgain points to the following poem by the chancellor as evidence that Gerson was poetically disinterested in classical verse:

Quisquis amas prosam metris ignoscito nostris;
 Sponte stylo veniunt corque lepore trahunt.
 Divos blanda libens elegia cantet amores
 Tracta malis toties serva libidinibus.
 Soletur senium, jam non captiva refectis
 Unguibus et casto conjugis apta thoro
 Cur non ancillae phronesis si libera fiat.
 Mundaque complacito confoveare sinu.
 Non majestati dictorum detrahit usus
 Metrorum, majus pondus eis tribuit
 Versibus omnimodis vates scripsisse sciuntur
 Ut Jeremias, Job, sic David et Moyses
 Carmina composuit Salomon re millia quinque;
 Cantata est mulier fortis ab ore suo
 Frenant ne vaga sit metra mentem plurima paucis
 Arcant et praestant esse sui memores.
 Plus sensus, plus lucis habent, plus ordine pollent
 Versus si cor eis cum studio dederis
 Verius et brevius servantur scripta ligata
 Metro, nam vitium protinus insinuant
 Fortior est vox que per stricta foramina transit
 Quam que decursu liberiore meat.
 Non aliter metris sententia pressa canoris
 Vi majore sonat, percutit et penetrat.¹⁰

[Whoever loves prose, shall overlook our meters. / They come by spontaneous style, and draw the heart charmingly / Let flattering elegy, willing, sing divine loves. / As oft it proceeds the slave to evil desires. / Accustomed to decay, now not captive with digits restored and proper to the pure marriage bed / why not to the handmaiden of prudence if she were free? / And may you be fostered favorably by the pure breast. / The use of meters does not detract from the majesty of words, it brings to them greater weight. / The poets are known to have written all sorts of verses / Such as Jeremiah, Job, so also David and Moses. /

¹⁰ Gl. 4: 157–58.

King Solomon composed a thousand and fifteen songs; / A brave woman was sung from his mouth. / Many meters bridle the mind, lest it wander, confined by brevity, and their memories are at hand. / Verses have more sense, more light, they are more powerful because of their order, if you give your heart to them with zeal. / Writing bound to meter is preserved more truly and briefly, for more constantly they publish error. / The voice is stronger which communicates through strict form / than that which passes in freer discourse. / Not otherwise than by metered song does a precise opinion resound, pierce through and penetrate by greater strength.]

Leaving aside the quality of Gerson's elegiac distiches, to argue that the verses indicate the poet's lack of concern for the classical masters seems eminently unfair. Rather, Gerson is arguing that the poet should choose a subject matter for which he has zeal—in his case, the theological and pastoral concerns of his vocation. And if eloquent verse well serves more temporal concerns, then why not those of a higher order? It is for reason of subjective affinity that he cites Moses, David, Jeremiah, Job, and Solomon, not because he considers Virgil a lesser poet, any more than he would consider Cicero a lesser writer than St. Paul qua epistler. As he wrote from Bruges to his colleagues at the College of Navarre in April of 1400:

Ceterum scriptis gentilium se non tradere sed commendare et ea velut peregrinando percurrer nequaquam improbaverim, tum pro copia sententiarum moralium, pro stylo et ornatu verborum, pro poematum et historiarum qualicumque peritia, demum pro oblectamento quodam ex variatione lectionis, quamquam in sacris doctoribus, ut in Augustino de Civitate Dei, in Orosio, in Hieronymo, in Lactantio et similibus multa istorum abundanter nec minus utiliter inveniendi crediderim.¹¹

[Other pagan writers I do not censure, not to surrender to them entirely but to commend and peruse in the manner of a sojourner, first on account of their bountiful moral opinions, their composition and verbal embellishment, their poetic and narrative skills of whatever sort, then because of the pleasure of a certain variation in reading, although I believe that in the holy doctors such as in Augustine's *City of God*, in Orosius, in Jerome, in Lactantius, and in writers similar to these, many of these same elements are found abundantly and no less usefully.]

His plea, then, is equivalent to his concern for a Ciceronean classical eloquence in his sermons. Unlike Jerome, however, who found his love of style an obstacle to his faith, dreaming of his obeisance before the judgment seat of Christ, where he is declared a Ciceronian and not a Christian, Gerson embraces humanistic learning as a pastoral vehicle. Such desire to enlist classical art in the service of

¹¹ Gl. 2: 30–35, here 34.

Christian message could only be thought alien to the spirit of the Renaissance by those harboring the mistaken belief that Renaissance humanism was somehow secular, not Christian. As a clergyman, Gerson could hardly ascribe to the notion *homo modum omnium est* (man is the measure of all things). On the other hand, his appreciation both of classical form and the pathos inherent in the work of its greatest practitioners, and their relevance to his own pastoral functions, would allow him to accord with *homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto* (I am human; I consider nothing human alien to me), a sentiment more universally ascribable to humanists than the former.

From the perspective of human experience, the closing lines of Virgil's Second Eclogue, "invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin," suggest a reasonably straightforward reading of the poem as a portrait of the rejected lover, one moment sophisticated, the next ridiculous, one minute self-delusional, the next self-deprecating, who ultimately awakes in the concluding verse to the cynical realities of love, as reflected in the famous query of the Eighth Eclogue, "an, qui amant, ipsi somnia fingunt?" (whether those who love weave dreams for themselves). Gerson was intimately attached to this latter passage, and fully empathized with the irrationalities of love in all its aspects, as we will address momentarily.

In his poem to Alexis, however, Gerson is addressing not the lover, Corydon, but the beloved, Alexis, who as the favorite of their mutual master, Iollas, has been taken to live in town.¹² Alexis is portrayed by Gerson as devoid of empathy, full only of himself: not an unreasonable interpretation given Virgil's text, which leaves Alexis a shadowy character, but to whom by implication may be attributed a self-conscious haughtiness, or *gloriatio* or *superbia* in the sense of vainglory, characteristic of urban life where true merit is unrecognized and love is a commodity available to the highest bidder. In fact, this latter theme is of constant concern to Corydon, who laments at one point:

Rusticus, es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis,
Nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas. [2.56–57]

[Corydon, you're a hick; Alexis doesn't care for your gifts / nor, if there were a contest in gifts, would Iollas concede.]

For Virgil's Corydon, this is a moment of self-awareness. He has been twice the *rusticus*: once literally, once because he has failed to realize his love will never be requited. He has been seized by *dementia* (madness) [2.69]. But an additional

12 2.1–6; see Wendell Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil Eclogues* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 62.

point is not lost on Gerson, who sees Alexis bound as if by chains of gold. And while the chastisement of Alexis seems natural to the medieval clergyman, is it really so far from the sentiments of Virgil's Corydon? After all, is not Corydon's plea an argument for the truer virtues of country life? In fact, when Corydon urges:

nec te paeniteat calamo triuisse labellum:
haec eadem ut sciret, quid non faciebat Amyntas? [2.34–35]

[You will not regret callousing your lip with the reed; / in order to learn this very thing what would Amyntas not have done?]

perhaps the concern of Alexis is not merely the physical pain, but the marring of his beauty with calloused lip. Yet, Corydon comes to realize that Alexis in his contempt for country life is also *demens* (out of his mind) [2.60]. He has abandoned not only human affection, but his *patria*, a sacrifice that Gerson deems pitiable.

It is worth noting in this context that Gerson does nothing to disguise or sanitize the pederastic implications of the Second Eclogue, as problematic as the homoerotic content of the poem may have been for some Christian readers.¹³ But Gerson was well aware that the close proximity and bonding of youths, as indeed personal familiarity generally, not uncommonly proceeded to intimacy. In his treatise, *De arte audiendi confessiones*, Gerson observes:

Congruit, prout expertus sum, quod parvuli et adolescents masculi prius interrogentur modo dicto de cohabitatione sociorum et famulorum, tamquam de his que prima facie minus horrent, qui minus insolita sunt, et postmodum quaeratur de cohabitatione mulierum.¹⁴

[It is proper, as I have experienced, that children and male adolescents first be asked in the said manner about intimacy with male friends and servants, since they at first glance are less frightened, because such things are less unusual, and afterward questioned concerning intimacy with women.]

In other words, the Second Eclogue can be so interpreted as to suggest that the impassive Alexis, who has abandoned all natural affection in exchange for being kept, is more in need of counsel than the love-sick Corydon, who in the end comes to his senses; and hence Gerson's poem is a fitting supplement to Virgil's Second Eclogue. However, Gerson seems perfectly capable of distinguishing between the

¹³ Ellen Oliensis, "Sons and Lovers: Sexuality and Gender in Virgil's Poetry," *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 294–311; here 294–95.

¹⁴ Gl. 8:10–17, here 15.

whimsical, self-conscious discrepancy between reality and illusion portrayed in the Second, and the more acute, if not pathological, obliteration of reality characterized in the Eighth Eclogue. As Leach has suggested, the lover in the latter has lost all objective standards, his only measure being himself; a man without identity outside his fictions and insubstantial fantasies which he himself creates.¹⁵ For Gerson, this tendency of affectivity to divorce itself from reality, producing a sort of radical subjectivity that today might be labeled schizoid, represents a common human experience, and he alludes to the Eighth Eclogue in several letters, as well as in his treatise *De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*. Virgil, of course, was writing primarily of romantic love, but Gerson understands that the psychological phenomenon pertains equally to any case of strong emotional attachment not anchored in external fact or evidence. Given his vocation, the chancellor's concern for affect without knowledge concentrated on its dangerous manifestation in pietistic enthusiasm. Typical of his use of the eclogue is the following passage from the aforesaid treatise providing practical advice on how to distinguish true from false revelations, wherein he discusses the tendency of even spiritual love to degenerate into self-deception, using as his example, Marie de Valenciennes, now generally accepted to have been the beguine, Marguerite Porete, who after her condemnation in Valenciennes, proceeded to publish her *Le mirouer des simples ames*, and was condemned and burned as a relapsed heretic in Paris in 1310¹⁶:

Recolitis opinor, ut apud Virgilium in Bucolicis quesitive ponitur: An qui amant, sibi Somnia fingunt. Et certe res sic se habet, quoniam amor inter omnes animae passiones magis penetrativus et alienativus; et si verus est, castus et sanctus, juvat incogitabiliter ad cognoscendum coelestia. Si autem vanus sit, erroneus et libidinosus varias sibi format illusions, ita ut credit videre seu cōgitare quae prorsus ignorant. Experimentum hujus rei in amore ereos conspicimus. Etenim si praedicta Maria non de viatoribus tique praeceptorum divinorum impletiōni ligatis, sed de statu beatorum, dilectionem quam describebat

15 Eleanor Winsor Leach, *Virgil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 158.

16 A panel of twenty-one theologians ruled *Le Mirouer des simples ames* heretical on fifteen counts in 1309. The documents pertaining to Marguerite's trial and that of her defender, Guiard de Cressonessart, are gathered and reprinted verbatim in P(aul) Verdeyen, "Le procès d'inquisition contre Marguerite Porete et Guiard de Cressonessart (1309–1310)," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 81 (1986): 47–94. Her first conviction occurred in Valenciennes sometime between the years 1296 and 1306, when some work by her was found heretical and ordered publicly burned. It is impossible to determine whether that earlier condemnation pertained to *Le Mirouer* or some earlier tome, although the later the date of the earlier order, the greater the likelihood that it was the same book since *Le Mirouer* contains an approbation indicating the book was reviewed by Godfrey des Fontaines, who died in 1306.

applicasset, vix altius quicquam de divina fruition, quoad aliqua, dici potuerat; sed fallebat eam sua tumiditas animi tantae passion dilectionis immixta. Putabat itaque jugiter se frui Deo dum vigebat haec passio fortis circa Deum in ejus animo quantumcumque a divinis praeceptis longe esset.¹⁷

[I think you will recollect that by Virgil in the *Bucolics* the question is raised: Or do those who love fashion dreams for themselves? And indeed, the thing so holds itself, for love among all the passions of the souls, is the most penetrating and alienating; and if it is true, pure and holy, it aids inconceivably to know celestial things. If, however, it is empty, erroneous and libidinous, it forms for itself different illusions, so that one thinks he sees or understands that of which he is thoroughly ignorant. We see evidence of this thing in love of heresy. And if indeed the aforesaid Marie had applied not to sojourners undoubtedly bound to fulfill the precepts of God, but to the state of the blessed, the love which she described, scarce could anything more sublime concerning divine enjoyment in any respect be expressed; but her tumidity of spirit, combined with passionate love, deceived her. And so she thought she would always enjoy God while this strong passion concerning God grew in her spirit, however far she might be from divine precepts.]

While Gerson's concern is with spiritual health, there can be no doubt that he fully appreciates that Virgil's eclogue is focused on the penetrating and alienating aspects of all consuming love. As he would write in *De passionibus animae*:

Nihil quidem sublimius sed nihil periculosius et tentationibus magis expositum quam ambulare per viam affectionis amorosae.

[Nothing indeed is more sublime nor poses greater hazards and temptations than to tread the path of passionate affection.]

Gerson, speaking of such beguines and begards as Marie, suggests in his second letter to Barthelémy Clantier in 1408 that they were not so much possessed of *amantia* as *amentia*, they had been seized with an insanity not uncommon where there was "*zelum non secundam scientiam*"¹⁸ (zeal not according to knowledge).

Likewise, Gerson frequently alluded to the *Aeneid* IV: 449 ("Mens immota manet, lacrimae voluuntur inanes" [The mind remained unmoved though the empty tears flowed]) to contrast pious steadfastness and emotion, once in *De Mystica theologia*, indust. 9, once in his second sermon for All Saint's Day, and once in his *Notulae super quaedam verba Dionyssi de Caelesti Hierarchi*.¹⁹ In other cases,

¹⁷ Gl. 3: 36–56; here 51–52.

¹⁸ Gl. 2:97–103; here 101–02.

¹⁹ André Combes, *Jean Gerson commentateur dionysien*. Études de philosophie médiévale, XXX (Paris: J. Vrin, 1940), 330–31 and note 3.

Gerson seems to have adopted classical forms for homiletic uses. The following verses appear in a sermon of 1403 delivered at the court of Pope Benedict XIII:

Heu gregis impacata lues nimis, heu grave ruris
Exitium experta, heu pecoris sors altera semper
Aut perit externo insultu suffert vel acerbos
Haerentesque cuti morbos vicinave damna.
Qualia miserum nunc patitur pecus omnia postquam
Fato versa malo tempus tulit et fuit error,
Rixaque pastorum sub quem me et innocuus grex
Ductorem trepidat, fugiunt pars altera Tibrim
Pars Rhodanum, nullo incerto pars altera sistit.²⁰

[Alas, the plague plundering exceedingly the flock; alas, the mischief sorely trying the country / alas the other lot of the herd always / either perishing from outside attack or suffering bitter / and enduring diseases of the skin or similar misfortunes. / Now the wretched herd endures all such things after / uncertainty occurred and brought a time turned to misfortune, / And a quarrel of the shepherds during which the harmless flock / also fears me, their leader, one group fleeing, part Rome, / part Gaul, undoubtedly another part remains.]

In some respects, this effort at bucolic verse, exhibiting a tendency toward stylistic emulation that Gerson evidenced even in his youth,²¹ is reminiscent of Virgil's First Eclogue. Both evoke a sense of loss, a theme of exile. Virgil's dispossessed Meliboeus bemoans, "Nos patriam fugimus" (We flee our fatherland) (1:4) and "At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros, pars Scythiam . . ." (But we must leave here, some thirsting for Africa, other Scythia . . .) (1: 64, et seq.). His sentiments are echoed in Gerson's verse by the line "fugiunt pars altera Tibrim Pars Rhodanum." Even the lament of Meliboeus over a state of affairs "en quo discordia civis produxit miseros . . ." (in which discord has begotten pitiable citizens) (1:71–72) is the lament of Gerson. For Virgil, the civil disruption occasioning dispossession and exile is that of the civil wars; for Gerson, the great schism. In both cases, the verse evokes the despair of a fractured order and the loss of *patria*. How mad Alexis must have been to abandon the place of his birth so cheaply!

Thus, in his occasional poetry and his literary allusions, as in his writings generally, we find the chancellor concerned with a universal psychological moment of emotional affect characteristic of the pathos so inherent in the human condition that in what may be his greatest verse, the *Josephina*, he suggests that

²⁰ The verse, Gl. 4: 107; the sermon, Du Pin I:143–54; here c. 44.

²¹ See, for example, his early effort at pastoral in the fashion of Petrarch, Gilbert Ouy, "Gerson, émule de Pétrarque: le 'Pastorium carmen', poème de jeunesse de Gerson, et la renaissance de l'ééglogue en France à la fin du XIV^e siècle," *Romania* 88 (1967): 174–231.

even Jesus by growing up in the midst of a loving family thereby learned what it was to be truly human. The dilemma for Gerson was how to harness the human affectivity essential to existential integrity, to avoid either the sterile impassivity of an Alexis or perhaps some of the Parisian masters on one hand, or the dangerous mania of a Marguerite on the other; in other words, to feel *secundum scientiam*, a question inextricably linked to his understanding of the psyche or soul itself.

While Gerson's anthropology insisted upon the *simplex animae substantia* of the soul, he maintained nominal distinction of the offices and operations of the powers of the soul, identifying in *De mystica theologia* three cognitive and three affective powers, operating in a correlative, reciprocal fashion.²² The cognitive powers of the soul, according to Gerson, are (1) simple intelligence, by which first principles are known²³; (2) reason, or the capacity to deduce conclusions from premises and to abstract²⁴; and (3) sensory cognition registering direct exterior stimuli,²⁵ or sense impressions made in the senses, called the communal sense, or judgments or sensations in the communal sense, which Gerson calls imagination or fantasy, as well as evaluation or memory. The affective powers are (1) synderesis,²⁶ or a natural inclination toward good born in the simple intelligence, and derived directly therefrom or the understanding derived therefrom,

22 "Sex iste potentie, tres cognitive et tres affective, lumina quedam sunt, que per considerationem lucis corporee facilius cognoscuntur." *De mystica Theologia*, ed. André Combes (Lugano: Thesaurus Mundi, 1958), 38.

23 "Intelligentia simplex est vis anime cognitiva suscipiens immediate a Deo naturalem quamdam lucem, in qua et per quam principia prima cognoscuntur esse vera et certissima, terminis apprehensis" [Simple intelligence is the cognitive power of the soul receiving directly from God a certain natural light in which and through which first principles are recognized as true and certain when definitions are grasped], *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 26.

24 "Ratio est vis anime cognoscitiva deductive conclusionum ex premissis, elicitiva quoque insensatorum ex sensatis et abstractive quidditatum, nullo organo in sua egens operatione" [Reason is power of the soul recognizing by deduction conclusions from premises and eliciting the unsensed from the sensed and the abstract from the essential with no organ acting in its operation], *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 29.

25 "Vis cognoscitiva sensualis est vis anime utens in sua operatione organo corporeo, tam exterior quam interior, ad ea, que sensibilia sunt per se vel per accidens cognoscenda" [The cognitive power of sense is the power of the soul using in its operation an organ of the body, as much exterior as interior, so that sensible things can be known either through their noumena or their accidents], *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 30–31.

26 "Synderesis est vis anime appetitiva immediate a Deo suscipiens naturalem quamdam inclinationem ad bonum, per quam trahitur insequi motionem boni ex apprehensione simplicis intelligentie sibi presentati" (Synderesis is the passionate power of the soul receiving directly from God a certain natural inclination toward good, through which it is drawn to follow the

or of habit; (2) the rational appetite moved by the cognitive grasp of reason,²⁷ which includes the will insofar as it is considered with respect to possibilities, or regarding acts derived therefrom, liberty, or with respect to objects, then choice or elective appetite, as well as the executive and purposive appetites concerning acting upon the foregoing, and the inclination therefor, called conscience. It is here that Gerson locates what he considers to be the principle personality types, i.e., the concupiscible, the irascible, and the rational, depending on the character of passions engendered by the affective rational appetite. Finally, (3) the animal or sensual appetite being the affective power moved solely by the senses.²⁸ These powers of the soul are not strictly hierarchical. Rather, the chancellor compares them to six mirrors reflecting one another in an interactive fashion.²⁹

In Gerson's schema, the intellectual powers were subject to a post-Lapsarian depravity, but the affective powers were less affected thereby, suggesting that the greater purity and soteriological possibilities of those latter powers bear significance for the reformation and salutary fulfillment of the intellectual powers. In short, it is possible to interject cognitive content into the *unio mystica*, but in experiential mode, to achieve a *cognitio experimentalis* of God's love through the affective power of synderesis.³⁰ As Gerson states in his sermon, *Ex Deo exivit*:

Hoc solo auctore sicut anima a Deo exivit, sic ad Deum vadit: quamquam donum hoc exercitibus se ad ipsum et non nisi talibus de lege communi praestetur.

movement of the good from its grasp afforded by the simple intelligence), *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 33.

27 "Appetitus rationalis est vis anime affectiva apta moveri immediate ad apprehensione cognoscitiva rationis" ([The rational appetite is the affective power of the soul adapted to being moved directly according to the cognitive grasp of reason], *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 35.

28 "Appetitus animalis vel sensualis est vis anime affectiva apta moveri immediate solum ab apprehensione sensitiva" (The animal or sensual appetite is the affective power of the soul adapted to being moved directly solely by grasp of the senses), *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 36.

29 "Sex iste potentie non solum lumina quedam sunt, sed quia luminosarum illustrationum capaces inveniuntur ipsis speculis rationabiliter comparamus (These six powers are not just certain lights but because they are found capable of vivid representation of light, we reasonably compare them to mirrors), *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 41.

30 Indeed, for Gerson achieving this experiential cognition is the essence of mystical theology: "Nam, ut patet ex supra dictis, mistica theologia est cognitio experimentalis habita de Deo per coniunctionem affectus spiritualis cum eodem, dum scilicet impletur illud apostoli: 'Qui adheret Deo, unius spiritus est'; que nimirum adhesio fit per extaticum amorem, teste 'beato' Dionysio'" (For as revealed by the aforesaid, mystical theology is knowledge conditioned to experience God through union of spiritual passion with the same, while certainly this filled the apostles: 'Who adheres to God is of one spirit'; and doubtless adherence proceeds through the ecstasy of love, as attested by the blessed Dionysius), *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 11 7.

[By this cause alone just as the soul proceeded from God, so to God it returns: albeit this gift is given to those exerting themselves therefore, and not except to such kind.]

At first, this phrase is reminiscent of the Franciscan formulation *facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*, particularly when paired with the concept of synderesis. However, Gerson is here discussing mystical union, not soteriology, and synderesis is unrelated to synergism with its Pelagian implications. Rather, synderesis is describing a God-infused predilection or affectivity for higher principles.³¹ This capacity, however, can only bear fruit insofar as it recognizes something toward which to be drawn. Hence, Gerson argues that cogitation, meditation, and ultimately, contemplation, are essential, though insufficient, to achieve such union. Only when contemplation, a cognitive act characterized by rest, fulfillment, and stability, takes place, can it produce affectivity which rises above and seizes the divine. As Gerson would later observe in *Consolatio Theologiae*, such emotion is not a soteriological requirement, and one does not have to feel the presence and activity of God to have moral certitude.³² Nonetheless, such affectivity completes intellectual activity and through its experience, a certain consolation is achieved, denied to those caught up in other affairs. As he observed in *Montaigne de contemplation*:

Et par ce je conclus que simples crestiens qui ont ferme foy de la bonté de Dieu et l'aiment ardanmet, ont plus veraie sapience et mieulx doivent ester appelés saiges que qualxconques clers qui sont sans amout et sans affection a Dieu et a ses sains.³³

[And by this, I conclude that simple Christians who have firm faith in the goodness of God and love him ardently have more true wisdom and a greater claim to being called wise than any scholar who has no love or affect for God and his saints.]

31 The closest Gerson comes to a Pelagian soteriological stance is when he suggests that those not using the gifts God gives them are like the servant in Matthew 25:26, who hid his talent rather than loan it out for profit and was condemned. *De mystica Theologia* (see note 15), 143–44. However, it is hardly certain that Gerson means to imply that such persons are damned in any soteriological sense, since he also equates the situation to Mary and Martha, concluding “Itaque maledictus est, qui partem suam, dum eliter liceret, facit deterioorem.” *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 144.

32 Gl. 9:234–35. Mark Stephen Burrows, *Jean Gerson and De Consolatione Theologiae (1418: The Consolation of a Biblical and Reforming Theology for a Disordered Age)*. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 78 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), argues that the treatise actually represents a departure from Gerson’s earlier concern with human efforts, but as McGuire, *Jean Gerson* (see note 2), 300, suggests, this suggests both too great a departure for Gerson and ignores his subsequent return to themes of human effort. In fact, this paper suggests that Gerson’s concern for *facere quod in se est* is perhaps of greater anthropological than soteriological concern.

33 Gl. 7: 16–55 at 20.

The obstacles to this progress include not only the senses and corresponding sensual appetites,³⁴ but also distraction with reason and the rational appetites, a subject on which Gerson spends much time in his sermon, *Fulcite*, on Saint Bernard, lamenting the failure of scholasticism to engender love of God, in its search at most for truth, at worst money and vainglory.³⁵ Not all distractions are necessarily sin *per se*: for example, involuntary responses to stimulation of the pudenda or nocturnal emissions are not inherently blameworthy. As he would write in his treatise on the latter, “No impurity of the body by itself impedes the celebration [of the mass], for it is an accidental matter, unless the reason concurs or consent is given in the soul.”³⁶ In *De pollutione diurnal*, Gerson goes so far as to suggest that in such instances of involuntary stimulation, pollution could be pleasing, not because of the pleasure involved, but because it brings relief to the body.³⁷ Indeed, the chancellor submitted in the *Regulae morales*, also known as the *Flores spiritualium moralium*, that no desire for something forbidden is in and of itself a mortal sin.³⁸ McGuire in his biography of the chancellor suggests that

34 “Sicut autem ymaginatio vel alie vires superiores super sensus exteriores efferuntur et rapiuntur, sic e contra constat animam quandoque sic detineri circa sensationem exterioris obiecti per tactum, gustum aspectumque, quod operationes potentiarum superiorum cessant aut impediuntur. Hoc autem proprie non dicitur raptus, sed tractus aut demersio, dum per potentiam inferiorem superior deorsum trahitur, et ab actu suo compellitur cessare; quod sit in nobis ex corruptela peccati, nimis faciliter et frequenter” (Moreover, just as the imagination or other higher powers are uplifted and carried away above the exterior senses, so the opposite pertains whenever the soul is detained with respect to exterior objects by touch, taste or sights, since the operations of the higher powers cease or are impeded. However, this is not properly called rapture, but distraction or submersion, when a higher power is dragged down by an inferior power and by its action is compelled to leave off; which all too easily and frequently occurs in us on account of the corruption of sin), *De mystica Theologia* (see note 22), 99–100.

35 Gl. 5: 325–339.

36 “Nulla corporalis immunditia de per se est impeditiva celebrationis, sed bene de per accidens, ratione concomitantiae alicujus, vel sequelae in anima” (No bodily impurity presents in itself an impediment to celebration, but properly relates to accidents, unless the reason concurs or yields in the soul), Gl. 9:43; Du Pin III:329.

37 “Si tamen dum sine tali consensus procurante eam, vel extorquante, provenit, ipsa placeat non quia delectatio est sed quia alleviationem corporis operator” (So nevertheless when without consent bringing it about or obtaining it, it occurs, this may be pleasing not because it is a delight but because it effects bodily alleviation), Gl. 9:62; Du Pin III:344.

38 “XXVIII: Nullum desiderium rei illicitae, factum tantmodo sub conditione actualiter vel habitualiter adhibita, est de per se mortale delictum: de per accidens tamen, propter appetitus sensualis commotionem nimiam quae scienter dimittitur invalescere ex talis desiderii continuatione libera, potest ipsum inter mortalia deputari; quia *qui amat periculum, peribit in illo*. Eccli.III.27” (No desire for an illicit thing, made only just under a condition actually or habitually invited, is in itself a mortal sin; however, it is an accident on account of the excessive excitement of the sen-

Gerson's posture represents a thin line between hypocrisy and self-awareness, somehow implying that human beings could both want and not want sexual release.³⁹ This ignores Gerson's understanding, however, that the will, part of the rational appetite, necessarily responds to the senses and sensual appetites, as well as vice versa. It is not wrong to wish to be relieved of an unwanted and uninvited sensory stimulus, though, as Gerson counseled, it is important not to "pretend one thing and do something else."⁴⁰ On the other hand, unnecessary, excessive, and unhealthy control of the body was likely to be of greater concern than corporeal accidents, since they could lead to obsessive or compulsive behaviors detracting from the use of the reason and suitable development of the rational appetites.⁴¹

It is to avoid such distractions that Gerson presumed that everyone needs times and places for withdrawal, if the higher faculties are to be exercised.⁴² He counseled against excessive asceticism, however, as apt to produce depression, and suggested that for some too much solitude allowed cogitation and meditation to descend into brooding.⁴³ The more one has spent one's time in worldly

sual desires which wisely should be suppressed from growing as a result of the unencumbered continuation of such longing, which itself may be reckoned among mortal sin, since 'who loves danger, shall perish in it.' Eccli. III.27), Du Pin III:83.

39 Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 228.

40 Despite the principle set forth in note 37, that release may be pleasing because it brings bodily alleviation, he cautions: "Videat tamen homo praeferatim novitius, ne huiusmodi complacentia se seducat, praetendens unum et agens alterum" (Nevertheless, I advise a newly arrived young man to reflect, lest such lead him into complacency, pretending one thing and doing the other) Gl. 9:62; Du Pin III:344.

41 "Itaque ad par exitium verunt abstinentia nimia et crapulosa voracitas; nisi quod irremediabilior est excessus in abstinentia; quia morbos affert incurabiles ex laesione cerebri et rationis perturbatione, quo sit ut per maniam aut furiam vel caeteras passiones melancolicas sic profundantur et intime radicanter phantasmata interius reservata in cerebro, quod esse reputantur verae res extrinsecus apparentes et audire se putat homo, videre vel tangere quod nullo modo sensu exterior percipitur" (And so excessive abstinence and drunken voracity will come to the same end; except that excess in abstinence less susceptible of remedy; since it produces incurable disease from brain lesion and mental disturbance, such that through mania or fury or other depressive passions phantasms held back inside in the brain are so poured forth and emitted so strongly that they are thought to be true things appearing externally and the person thinks he hears or sees or touches what no type of external sense perceives), *De distinctione revelationum*, Gl. 3:44.

42 See Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson* (see note 39), 117.

43 "Li aulscuns sont qui tantost seront temptés de blasphemies et aultres vices si orriblement que a paines se porteront, et enchéent aucunes fois en fronaise ou hors de bonne creance, et en

pursuits, the more difficult and the more dangerous to spend time in solitude, since such persons are inclined to think instead about their own bad inclinations and thereby become worse.⁴⁴ The standard repertoire of temptations, unbelief, despair, impatience, pride, and avarice, was bound to torment those following *solitudinis vitam ineptum*, as Gerson describes in his eighth tract on the Magnificat.⁴⁵ But even for those adopting an eremitic vocation, it was essential to temper discipline lest the rigors of abstinence cloud the mind or worse yet lead to the irreversible impediment of reason. As he asserts in the rule proposed for the Hermit Antoine, a recluse of Mont-Valérien:

sont fais mellancolieux, tristes et yreulx, et que tout leur desplaist; et voient par bonne experience que trop mieux est ester en compagnie et en labeur par dehors, car ne pensent mie a tells choses; et tells aussie ne valent riens, se n'est de grasce especialle, a la vie contemplative; ou au mains leur est trop dure et tres perilleuse" (There are some others who will be so tempted by blasphemy and other vices so horribly that they will be at pains to comport themselves, and sometimes they will succumb to confusion or loss of their right mind, and some will be made melancholic, sad and angry, and dissatisfied with everything; and they discover through experience that it is much better to be in company and to labor outdoors, for then they think not a bit about such things; and such are not at all suitable for the contemplative life, unless by special grace, where in their own hands, it is too difficult and dangerous), *La Montaigne de contemplation*, Gl. VII:34.

44 "Si pouez congnoistre que jeunes gens plains encores de temtacions charnelles et aultres, et grans pecheurs aussi, qui ont mené maine vie longuement, ne puent ne doivent soudainement soi donner du tout a la perfection de contemplation. Pour quoy? Pou ce que quant it cuideroient penser a Dieu et avoir pures oraisons en secret et en oiseuseté, ils penseroient lors plus tost et plus habundamment a leurs maies inclinations et devendroient pieurs" (So you are able to learn that young people yet full of carnal and other temptations, and great sinners as well, who have long maintained a debased life, are unable to suddenly give themselves over entirely to the perfection of contemplation. Why? Because when they try to think of God and to have pure prayer in secret and at rest, they instead think more fully and abundantly of their own evil inclinations and become worse), *La Montaigne de contemplation*, Gl. 7: 27.

45 Du Pin, IV:352–392, at 364D: "Circumit et considerate Satan iste alterum quem ex instabilitate propria, vel infirmitate cognoscit ad Religionis, aut solitudinis vitam ineptum" (This satan walks about and carefully investigates whom on account of peculiar inconstancy or infirmity is unsuitable for a life of asceticism or solitude), and 367D: "Circumit iste Satan, iste depositus, et invenit hominem in solitudine vel deserti sicut est pellicanus; vel domicilii, sicut nycticorax, vel tecti, sicut passer . . ." (This Satan, this forsaken one, goes about and finds a man in the solitude of the wilderness just as a pelican, or of the house, as a nycticorax, or of the cloister, a sparrow . . .). On such temptations and the dangers of solitude in old age, see Scott L. Taylor: "'L'age plus fort ennaye': *Scientia mortis, ars moriendi* and Jean Gerson's Advice to an Old Man," *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 407–20.

Item sit abstinencia tua sic moderata quod nec sit onerosa purae mentis elevation per nimiam ingurgitationem et repletionem, nec sit destructive corporis et impeditive debiti usus rationis per excessivam abstinenciam debilitantem et evacuantem cerebrum et quandoque melancolicas insanias operantem; qui haec abstinencia indiscrete tanto periculosior esset quanto ad sanationem minus reduce posset si semel rationem everterit. Idem dicimus de somno, de vestimento, de cubili et allis recreationibus ad carnem spectantibus, immo et de scribendo et de ipsis lacrymis, pro quanto redundant in fatigationem corporis.⁴⁶

[Let your abstinence be so moderate that it neither burdens the pure elevation of your mind through excessive gorging and replenishment, nor wastes the body and impedes the due exercise of reason through intemperate abstinence weakening and depleting the brain, sometimes resulting in depressive insanity. For such indiscrete abstinence is so dangerous in as much as it is less possible to restore the health once the reason is destroyed. We say the same concerning sleep, clothing, bedding and observance of other bodily restoratives, even concerning writing and tears themselves, in as much as they flood the body in weariness.]

If we were to express the major tenets of Gerson's psychology, the following would represent significant observations:

1. Human beings have very limited control over bodily functions, including involuntary responses to stimuli;
2. Over-concern for the foregoing may produce obsessive or compulsive reactions that interfere with the reason and rational appetites;
3. The rational appetites themselves may be affected by sensory experience, in terms of memory, desires, imagination, etc., in what today would be called priming of the subconscious;
4. That the reason may concur or not in such experiences or affects when they are recognized for what they are;
5. That excessive sensory experiences can interfere with the exercise of the reason, just as excessive use of reason and the rational appetites can detract from the exercise of simple intelligence;
6. That no amount of cognition can bear fruit in the absence of affect: i.e., passion, while dangerous, is as indispensable to cognition as experience is to knowledge.

Gerson's psychology was developed, of course, in conjunction with his mystical theology, itself a sort of *media via* between Dionysius and Scotus, wherein through the affective senses, speculative essentialisms are existentialized, and insofar as transformation takes place, it is the homogenization of the faithful man in his *esse realis*, through anthropological resources, humiliating activity, and sacra-

⁴⁶ Gl. 2:80–84, here 82.

mental grace, to the *esse idealis*, in the manner of prelapsarian Adam. Unification, when achieved at all, is reached in this similitude, preserving the ontological gulf threatened by notions of substantive union. But in so doing, and recognizing the import of what he referred to as ambidexterity,⁴⁷ the balancing of contemplative exercise and temporal obligation, his predilections even here were to achieve a unifying synthesis dedicated to furtherance of the church's sacramental mission, with due deference paid to the pathos inherent in the human condition. It is the function of the Church both to comprehend and channel, whether through pulpit or practical mysticism, that vestigial synderesis, or divinely infused predilection for good, which left unused is subject to atrophy, when left to its own devices, peril, but which is nonetheless capable of manipulation and growth if properly understood.

In a sense, Gerson has developed a late-medieval psychology of the whole person, designed to conform his actual person to his ideal potential, even as he saw the church possessed of a semen guaranteeing its perfection as a totality for its spiritual function, incapable of ever entirely falling away, though its nonessential temporal form require reformation. In either case, creaturely status demands comprehension of the functional totality; and in this sense, Gerson may be regarded not merely as the apostle of unity, as one scholar has called him,⁴⁸ but advocate of a holistic theology.

⁴⁷ “Secus ubi contemplatio cessit alicui in talem familiaritatem, quod ambidexter factus potest imperturbatus velut angelus Dei contemplando agere et agendo contemplari, aut saltem protinus absque multa difficultate de hoc mitigare se valet dareque in alterum, qualiter esse convenit eum, qui in statu perfectionis exercende positus est” (It is otherwise, where contemplation submits to one so intimately that undisturbed he is able to act ambidextrously, just like an angel of God, working while contemplating, contemplating while working, or at least immediately without much difficulty to be able to calm the one and bring about the other, in the manner befitting one who is placed in a state of exercising perfection), *De mystica theologia* see note 22), 141–42.

⁴⁸ Guillaume H(enri) M(arie) Posthumus Meyjes, *Jean Gerson—Apostle of Unity: His Church Politics and Ecclesiology*, trans. J. C. Grayson. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 94 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1999), 381 et seq.

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A Comparison of the Psychological Insights of Petrarch and Johann Weyer

Mental states that were considered abnormal were already described and interpreted by authors of the Graeco-Roman centuries. The descriptions have been well reviewed by Giuseppe Roccatagliata¹ and Stanley W. Jackson.² The psychoanalyst-historian Gregory Zilboorg (1890–1959) has been criticized for his emphasis on demonology in interpreting medieval beliefs about aberrant thinking and behavior. However, Jerome Kroll, while criticizing Zilboorg, did not mention either Petrarch or Weyer.³ This essay argues for a correction in the interpretation of the early history of psychiatry. In 1935 Zilboorg called Johann Weyer (1515–1583) “the founder of modern psychiatry” and his *De praestigiis Daemonum* “a monumental work of great scholarship.”⁴ Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) listed it among the ten books he considered the most important, grouping Weyer’s work with those of Copernicus and Darwin.⁵ At least five authors more recently have concurred with Zilboorg. I agree that Weyer exhibited great scholarship, but I believe that Carl Binz (1832–1913), a German pharmacologist and biographer of Weyer, more appropriately called him “agitator against superstition, cruelty and incessant judicial murder.”⁶ The historian of theology Paul Carus (1851–1919) in 1900 referred to “the Protestant physician Johannes Weyer” as having made the first temporarily successful attempt to stop witch prosecution, limited to the jurisdiction of his patient, Duke William V of Jülich-Cleves.⁷ Since the 1960s Weyer has been referred to more often. The renewed interest was begun by psychiatrist-historian George Mora in

1 Giuseppe Roccatagliata, *A History of Ancient Psychiatry* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

2 Stanley W. Jackson, “Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe. I. Medical Syndromes of Mental Disorder: 400–1100 A.D.,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 27 (1972): 262–97.

3 Jerome Kroll, “A Reappraisal of Psychiatry in the Middle Ages,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 29 (1973): 276–83.

4 Gregory Zilboorg, *The Medical Man and the Witch During the Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), 204–06.

5 Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1953), 3 vols. Here vol. 3, 422.

6 Carl Binz, *Doctor Johann Weyer ein rheinischer Arzt, der erste Bekämpfer des Hexenwahns*. 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (1896; Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 1969), 1.

7 Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1900), 373.

1963, celebrating the fourth centennial of Weyer's opus.⁸ The psychoanalysts Franz Alexander (1891–1964) and Sheldon Selesnick (1925–1967) included him in their *History of Psychiatry*.⁹ Social historian George Rosen (1910–1977) merely pointed out that Weyer only “insisted that the accused witches were only melancholic old women misled by the Devil.”¹⁰ Christopher Baxter in his analysis of Weyer's text, “Unsystematic Psychopathology,” focused on his ambivalence about witches and demonic scheming, and also avoided the psychiatric relevance of any of Weyer's arguments.¹¹ Since then Hugh Trevor-Roper¹² and Theodore Millon¹³ have also briefly cited Weyer. However, the most detailed recent consideration of *De praestigiis daemonum* is by Erik Midelfort in *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. His emphasis is on Weyer's legal reasoning in defense of those who were accused of daemonic possession or witchcraft.¹⁴

Of course, folklore about witches and demons is ancient. Although such beliefs continued to thrive within Christian cultures, particularly in German lands, demonologic explanations of natural phenomena and behavior apparently were not causing similarly severe agitations in fourteenth-century Italy.¹⁵

I will propose that certain portions of *De remediis utriusque fortune*, composed by the Florentine poet Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch in English, 1304–1374),¹⁶ a major harbinger of the Italian Renaissance, indicate more modern and comprehensive psychiatric understanding over a broader area of mental and emotional problems than Weyer subsequently demonstrated. Further implications of Petrarch's relative modernity are that he considered both astrology in

8 George Mora, “On The 400th Anniversary of Johann Weyer's ‘De praestigiis daemonum’: Its Significance for Today's Psychiatry,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 120 (1963): 417–28.

9 Franz Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 86–88.

10 George Rosen, *Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1968), 239–40.

11 Christopher Baxter, “Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum*: ‘Unsystematic Psychopathology,’”

The Damned Art. Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft, ed. Sydney Anglo (London and Boston, MA: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1968), 53–75.

12 Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). 147.

13 Theodore Millon, *Masters of the Mind* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 89–91.

14 H. C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999) 196–223.

15 Trevor-Roper, *Witch-Craze* (see note 12), 90–91.

16 Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 276.

letters to Francesco Bruni (Sen. I:7)¹⁷ and to Boccaccio, (Sen. III:1) in about 1363¹⁸ and alchemy in its own chapter in *De Remediis* (II:111) to be fraudulent.

This opus, in sixteenth-century English called *Physic against Fortune as well Prosperous as Adverse*, and in the twentieth century, *Remedies for Fortune, Fair and Foul*,¹⁹ has been considered evidence of the “new humanism” of which Petrarch was a pioneer. However, it has also been derogated, and its psychiatric insights have remained unrecognized. Morris Bishop (1893–1973), when commenting on *Physic against Fortune* in his biography of Petrarch, called its author “an aging man indulging his insufferable petulance.”²⁰ Admittedly, each author had a different purpose. Petrarch was writing a stoically oriented self-help manual to guide the readers’ responses to numerous circumstances, while Weyer sought to counter the prevalent demonologic explanations regarding aberrant behaviors, and incidentally described behaviors that are now considered to be examples of specific psychiatric syndromes.

Examples of Ancient Psychiatric Formulations

The largest parts of ancient writings that can be construed as psychiatric pertain to treatment rather than diagnostic characteristics and are irrelevant to the present context. The topic is comprehensively reviewed by Roccatagliata (1986).²¹ The most common diagnostic distinction that was made was between acute febrile delirium and abnormalities that occur in the absence of fever, and usually have a longer course. The following selections are mine.

Cornelius Celsus in the first century C.E. introduced the term *insanity*: “I shall begin with insanity, and first that form of it which is both acute and found in fever.

17 Petrarch *Old Age* to Francesco Bruni Sen I:7, 31–36. No flight from death. On the lies of astrologers, see 32–34.

18 Francesco Petrarca, *Letters of Old Age. Rerum Senilium libri I–XVIII*, volume one, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, Saul Levin and Reta A. Bernardo (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), Sen. III:1, to Boccaccio concerning the latest plague, 75–91; concerning astrologers, see 80–82.

19 Conrad A. Rawski, *Petrarch’s Remedies for Fortune Fair and Fou. A Modern English Translation of De Remediis Utriusque Fortune, with a Commentary*. 5 vols. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

20 Morris Bishop, *Petrarch and his World* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1963), 329–30.

21 Roccatagliata, *Ancient Psychiatry* (see note 1). Demonology, 67–79; Celsus, 181–92; Caelius, 237–50; Paulus Aegineta, 262–65.

The Greeks call it *phrenesis*. Insanity is really there when a continuous dementia begins, when the patient, although up to then in his senses, yet entertains certain imaginings; the insanity becomes established when the mind becomes at the mercy of such imaginings.” Abnormal behavior may be merely verbal or also physical. The condition is more severe when it is associated with depression rather than with laughter. The patient may exhibit fright of his environment, insomnia, or withdrawal.²²

The writings of Caelius Aurelianus, the fifth-century translator of the extant portions of the writings of Soranus of Ephesus (early second century), contains the longest relevant ancient psychiatric discussions. He uses “insanity” as a synonym for furor, which includes mania and melancholy. Severe pain is a cause of mental derangement that is reversible with mitigation of the pain. Loss of reason from *phrenitis* occurs with or without pain and is more persistent. If there is fever it always precedes the madness. Mania is a chronic impairment of reason. Symptoms of mania include insomnia, excessive venery, anger, grief, anxiety, superstitious fear, and/or use of drugs—especially aphrodisiacs. “When mania lays hold of the mind, it manifests itself now in anger, now in merriment, now in sadness or futility, and now, as some relate, in an overpowering fear of things that are quite harmless.”²³

Paul of Aegina (seventh century) has “a melancholic humor seizing the understanding.” Symptoms are fear, despondency, and misanthropy. Manifestations of the latter term are consistent with schizophrenia: hallucinations as animals, inanimate objects that they fear of breaking, suicidal ideas, irrational laughing or weeping. Demoniacs who have delusions of being impelled by higher powers and/or can foretell events constitute a sub-category. Mania is not defined, but affected persons “are to be treated like melancholics.”²⁴

Demography and Plague

The interpretation of medieval demography is based on rather scant and scattered documentary data, mainly from tax rolls and anthropologic discoveries

²² Aulus Cornelius Celsus, *De Medicina*, trans. Walter G. Spencer. 3 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1948–1961), vol. 1: 289–303.

²³ Caelius Aurelianus, *On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*, trans. Israel E. Drabkin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 27–47.

²⁴ *The Seven Books of Paulus Aegineta translated from the Greek with a Commentary*, ed. Francis Adams. Three vols. (London: Printed for the Sydenham Society, 1844), I:383–89.

from exhumed cemeteries. The studied European population appears to have been increasing for at least two centuries until leveling off in the last half of the thirteenth. After its decimation in the fourteenth-century plague pandemics it regained its pre-plague size in the mid-sixteenth century. Josiah Russell estimated 4–5 live births per married woman, undoubtedly limited by maternal mortality. Quantitative data are even less reliable and only available for scattered districts.²⁵ An estimate of English thirteenth-century data shows 14% first-year deaths and a quarter before the fifth birthday.²⁶ In non-plague years in the region that included Italy in the period 1348–1500 only 14.8% of men and 14.3% of women who had survived to age 20 were living at age 60. During plague years this probability was reduced to 7.1% and 4.6% respectively. It soon became evident that the plague of 1348–1350 was not a singular punishment to be remembered, since four more discrete plague epidemics comprising sixteen more years occurred in Italy by 1400. Thus, psychologically, this horror might persist forever.²⁷

Prologue on Humanism

In agreement with most scholars, Charles Nauert called Petrarch “the first major figure of humanism.”²⁸ He “raised most of the issues of humanistic culture and set many of the directions in which it moved during the two centuries that followed his lifetime.” The term “humanities” had been introduced by Cicero. It in general meant a concept of education relevant to ethical participation in contemporary society. In the Middle Ages it remained a poorly defined distinction from scholasticism. Petrarch revived research and interest in ancient literature and sought to advance its understanding to a less rigidly religious one with relevance to contemporary society.

A goddess Fortuna existed in pre-Roman Italian folklore and is said to have reached Rome in 204 B.C.E.²⁹ She is the only member of the Roman pantheon

²⁵ Josiah Cox Russell, *The Control of Late Ancient and Medieval Population* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1985), 50, 106–08, 190.

²⁶ Josiah Cox Russell “Late Medieval Population Patterns,” *Speculum* 28 (1945): 157–71.

²⁷ Josiah Cox Russell, *Late Ancient and Medieval Population* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1958), 1–151; here 34.

²⁸ Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, 2nd ed. (1995; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8–26.

²⁹ Felix Guirand and A. V. Pierre, “Roman Mythology,” *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, ed. Felix Guirand, trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames (New York: Prometheus Press, 1959), 225.

that survived well into Christian culture, not as a goddess, of course, but as the personification of uncertainty. Her most important early Christian reference is in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, by Anicius Boëthius in 525, in which the symbolic “wheel of fortune” was introduced.³⁰ Dante in the *Inferno* (ca. 1310) subsequently popularized the use of the wheel and the two fortunes, good and bad.³¹ Petrarch alludes to this wheel in his dedication of *De Remediis*:

We know how Fortune has tormented many upon the rack, and many she has lulled to sleep in delights, and many she has swung up and down in her wheel. We neither lack examples of such as have climbed, nor some that fall, neither am I ignorant that some have been thrown down from the top of high dignity.³²

In a second medieval concept, Fortune was connected to astrology: the position of the stars determine one’s destiny which, however, is executed by Fortune. The praiseworthiness of poverty that is emphasized by Petrarch is illustrated by Boccaccio in a tale in his *De casibus virorum illustrium*, a work that was written during and after Petrarch’s *Physic against Fortune*. In it Poverty battles Fortune and ultimately wins.³³ The poverty motif was not uniquely Italian. For example, William Langland, an English contemporary of Petrarch, employed it in his tale of *Piers the Ploughman*:

As far as I can discover, all the wise men of the past have praised poverty, and said that, born with patience, it is the best life Poverty is sweeter than honey to the soul, for patience is the bread of poverty, and sobriety is a sweet drink and an excellent medicine for sickness.³⁴

30 Howard Rollin Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature* (1927; New York: Octagon Books, 1967). Regarding the wheel of fortune, see 18–29.

31 Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th–18th Centuries* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 155–56.

32 Francesco Petrarca, *Physicke against Fortune, as Well Prosperous as Averse: Conteyned in Two Bookes. Whereby Men are Instructed with Lyke in Differencie to Remedie Theyr Affections Aswell in Tyme of the Bryght Shynyng Sunne of Prosperities, as Also of the Soule Lowryng Stormes of Adversitie: Excellent for All Men but Most Necessary for Such as be Subject to Any Notable Insult of Eyther Extremitie* (London: Printed by Richard Watkyns, 1579).

33 Patch, *Goddess* (see note 29), on Boccaccio’s poverty legend, see 73–74.

34 William Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, trans. Jonathan F. Goodridge (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK, and Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1959), Book X 172, Book XIV, 214.

Physic Against Fortune

While we do not know what stimulated Petrarch to write *Physic against Fortune*, it seems plausible that wide-spread anxiety caused by the plague pandemic played a role. Poetry such as one of his *Epistolae metricae* from late 1348 supports this inference. It begins:

Alas, what lies before me? Whither now
 Am I to be whirled away by the force of fate?
 Time rushes onward for the perishing world,
 And round about I see the hosts of the dying,
 The young and the old; nor is there anywhere
 In all the world a refuge, or a harbor
 Where there is hope of safety. Funerals
 Where're I turn my frightened eyes, appall;
 The temples groan with coffins, and the proud
 And the humble lie alike in lack of honor.
 The end of life presses upon my mind,
 And I recall the dear ones I have lost,
 Their cherished words, their faces vanished now.
 The consecrated ground is all too small
 To hold the instant multitude of graves³⁵

That Petrarch personally escaped the infection is documented in a letter to Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) in 1365 or 1366: “Aside from high fevers which I have so far not experienced and hopefully I never will . . . I feel, even at my present age [ca. 61], that if I were not bled profusely every spring and fall, this Greek treasure (therapeutics ironically) would have long ago conquered me.”³⁶ However, many of his closest friends fell victim. Most important among these were his patron, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna and Laura, his idealized love, both in 1348, and his son, Giovanni, in 1361.³⁷ On the side of prosperous fortune, according to a letter Petrarch wrote in 1353, his brother, Gherardo, inexplicably remained well when he, against the advice of his superior, remained in the French monastery where he had resided for ten years to care for his thirty-four fellow monks, who all died of the plague.³⁸ The pandemic, initially called “the Great Mortality” rather than

³⁵ *Epistola Metrica*, I:14; quoted in Wilkins, *Life* (see note15). On the hopelessness of surviving the plague, 79–80.

³⁶ Petrarch *Old Age* (see note 16). Sen. V:3 167–76 to Boccaccio. On Petrarch’s health, see 170.

³⁷ Renee N. Watkins, “Petrarch and the Black Death: From Fear to Monuments,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (1972): 196–223.

³⁸ Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Petrarch at Vauchuse: Letters in Verse and Prose* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), Fam. XVI:2, 165–72, to Gherardo. On Gherardo’s Plague immunity, see 166–67.

“the Black Death,” had reached Europe in late 1347 and had struck Florence in March 1348 according to Boccaccio: “Almost all died within three days of the appearance of symptoms,” engendering fear and social disorganization.³⁹ A little later, in a letter to another friend (“Socrates”), Petrarch expressed his desperation about the plague:

Nor is it fitting to compare these misfortunes to any wars, for in such wars there are many kinds of remedies, and ultimately the possibility of at least dying in a manly fashion. For to die well is an exceptional consolation for death. In the present case there is absolutely no remedy, and no comfort. Not knowing the cause and origin of our misfortune only adds to the extent of the disaster.⁴⁰

A decade later he rejected a physician friend’s offer of safety in the countryside:

Were I to flee the plague which has thus far terrified rather than invaded this city (Milan) . . . though I may dodge a number of death’s arrows I expose my life to another (cause) . . . While the art of medicine does contribute something to maintaining health and curing minor disease, it still stands by helplessly before final things. Hence that flight of doctors and that despair at curing the ill⁴¹

In the twentieth century the chaos was addressed well by Nohl,⁴² especially in his chapter IX “The Erotic Element in the Plague,” and by both Nohl and Amundsen⁴³ in regard to the doctor-patient relationship. Within one year of its onset five plague tracts are known to have been written, and twenty within five years, touting their author’s favorite, utterly ineffective botanical and dietetic cures,⁴⁴ while the clergy could only give reassurances of a better life in heaven. Boccaccio

³⁹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, trans. John G. Nichols (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2008), First day, 7–17.

⁴⁰ Petrarca *Rerum familiarum libri I–VIII*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975), Fam VIII:7 415–20, to “Socrates” (Ludwig van Kempen) on the plague. Quote 417–18.

⁴¹ Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters. Rerum Familiarum libri XVII–XXIV*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo (Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), XXII:12, 235–39, to Albertino da Cannobio on the inevitability of death. On Petrarch’s reluctance to flee, see 237.

⁴² Johann Nohl, *The Black Death: A Chronicle of the Plague*, trans. C. H. Clarke (1924; New York: Harper & Row, 1969), esp. chapter 9 (206–26) and chapter 3 (73–77).

⁴³ Darrel W. Amundsen, “Medical Deontology and Pestilential Disease in the Late Middle Ages,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 32 (1977): 403–21.

⁴⁴ Charles-Edward Winslow and Marie L. Duran-Reynals, “Jacme d’Agramont and the first of the plague tractates,” *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 22 (1948): 747–64.

and Petrarch first met in 1350, the year when *The Decameron* was completed.⁴⁵ Their correspondence continued until 1373.

In the late Middle Ages the populace was resigned to a rather miserable life, with wide-spread malnutrition and high infant and maternal mortality rates.⁴⁶ Although the Hundred Years' War that began in 1337 directly affected only England, part of France and Flanders, its troop movements and disrupted agriculture also widely exacerbated malnutrition and the spread of disease. So the assumption that the superimposition of a socially disruptive medical catastrophe would have added a new level to endemic anxiety about the fragility of life is plausible, and manifested by the revival of ideas about mental dysfunction that had been expounded by ancient Greek and Roman authors.

Petrarch began to work on *Physic against Fortune* at the age of fifty in 1354; he had composed most of it by 1357,⁴⁷ but completed it in 1366. It is noteworthy that he did not dedicate it to a high Church official, of whom he knew many, but to Azzo da Correggio (d. 1362), a once prosperous but now enfeebled friend.⁴⁸ It was Petrarch's longest and at the time one of his most famous works, being published in print in seven languages between 1501 and 1606. The title may have been adapted from *De Officiis* (II–6), an essay by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.):

Who fails to comprehend the enormous two-fold power of Fortune for weal and for woe? When we enjoy her favoring breeze we are wafted over to the wished-for haven; when she blows against us, we are dashed to destruction.⁴⁹

Cicero was the principal source cited by Petrarch in the chapters I have analyzed.

Indeed, Petrarch's love of Cicero caused serious ambivalence. Writing to his brother, he admitted that in regard to philosophical concerns about life and death he prefers Cicero, "whom I almost trust more regarding this matter than the majority of Catholic writers."⁵⁰ He continues:

Although Aristotle "was a great man" "why would I dare argue against Aristotle? Perhaps this seems almost a sacrilege to many, whereas it is perhaps more of a sacrilege to want to follow him obstinately in everything. Certainly the great Cicero with his elegant refinement preferred at times to assume personal blame than to refute openly any error by that philoso-

⁴⁵ Boccaccio *Decameron* (see note 37), Introduction, X–XI.

⁴⁶ Russell, *The Control of Late Ancient and Medieval Population* (see note 24).

⁴⁷ Wilkins *Life* (see note 14) on the English translation of *De Remediis*, see 138, 205.

⁴⁸ Wilkins *Life* (see note 15), pertaining to Azzo da Correggio, 173, 188.

⁴⁹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller. Loeb Classical Library, 21 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), DO II:4, 187.

⁵⁰ Petrarch (see note 38), Fam. X:5, 76–82, to Gherardo. Ultimately health comes from God.

pher; for example, because Aristotle had said that all melancholic people are gifted, Cicero, who did not like the idea, jokingly said that he liked having a slow intelligence, clearly insinuating his feeling about the idea. Let us follow Cicero's example. In his *Rhetorica* Aristotle does confirm the correctness of the view that anger is much sweeter than honey. What else shall I say except that I am glad to have a dull sense of taste . . . But if one must swear by Aristotle's words and consider whatever he said as though it were a divine oracle, even to accepting the idea that anger may not only be sweet, but even sweeter than honey, you still did well to reject that arrogant and monstrous sweetness . . . ”⁵¹

The overriding goal of life, for both Cicero and Petrarch, is to live virtuously. Cicero was more succinct in defining the meaning of this, which he did repeatedly. In *De Officiis* we find that one's emotions must be kept under control in regard to three factors: 1. Most important is that impulses shall obey reason; 2. Estimate the importance of the objective you wish to accomplish; 3. Observe moderation in seeking your goal (DO I:39).⁵²

This is restated: Virtue in general may be said to consist almost wholly of three properties: 1. “Wisdom,” which means understanding of reality; 2. “Temperance,” meaning keeping one's impulses under control; 3. “Justice,” meaning prudent interpersonal behavior.⁵³ To these is added in *Tusculan Disputations*: “The virtue which I usually call self-control and occasionally also discretion, but it may be the virtue could rightly be called “frugality . . .” This embraces all the other virtues as well. Therefore I count “‘frugality’ by itself as the fourth virtue.”⁵⁴

I have used the 1579 English translation of the text of *De remediis utriusque fortune* by Thomas Twyne.⁵⁵ The first book contains 122 chapters pertaining to good fortune and the second, comprising 132 chapters, bad fortune. “This shall be advice about the two Fortunes and the controlling value of virtue, condensed.” The length of the chapters varies considerably. Analogous citations from Cicero noted in the text will be found in an addendum.

Under the heading of good fortune Petrarch tells his readers that body and mind should not be considered independent of each other: “. . . bodily health, to the end it is not harmful to him who has it, ought to be tempered with no other thing than by adjoining there onto the good health of the mind, and the importance of a good memory (I:8). A sick mind dwells in no place worse than

51 Petrarch *Fam* (see note 39), *Fam* XX:14 159–163, to Gherardo a reply. On Aristotle and Cicero, 160.

52 Cicero (see note 48), *DO* I:39, 145.

53 Cicero (see note 48), *DO* II:5, 185.

54 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* trans. John E. King (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), *TD* III:16, 245.

55 Wilkins, *Life* (see note 15). On the English translation of *De Remediis*, see 138–39.

in a whole body”(II:3; TD III:4–5).⁵⁶ The body-mind relationship had previously been alluded to in a late 1340s letter to a sick friend: “Finally you must remember that mental disposition usually has an influence on the body, whether it is ill or healthy. There are some men who shorten their life span by secretly consuming their own hearts—no greater madness can be imagined—while others prolong their flowering years in noble joy, delaying death and old age . . .” (Fam. IX:1).⁵⁷ Soon thereafter the same opinion was expressed in a letter to Petrarch’s brother, Gherardo:

Just as medicine gives health to the body, so there is an art that assures health to sick minds, a most useful art, if it delivered what it promised and if it sought divine aid without which nothing can be done . . . Although the potency of herbs growing in the soil is useful for a sick body, and although many have composed and collected medications made of words for a sick and weak mind, nevertheless true health of both parts of man derive from God. Among those who heal minds some provide cures for the individual, others for the family (Fam. X:).⁵⁸

Similarly, in a chapter on physical health we find that it might enable its owner to be led astray. This is the meaning of the statement: “Bodily health, to the end that it is not harmful to him who has it, ought to be tempered with no other thing than by adjoining thereto the good health of the mind. A sick mind dwells in the place worse than in a whole body”(I:3). In the opposing chapter, “Of Sickness,” we find “Frugality is an earnest exhorter and dissuader from licentiousness and a mistress of modesty. . . .”(II:3) This passage also serves as an example of the difficulty of interpreting whether or not Petrarch’s intent is being interpreted for presentistic (addendum 5) convenience, for it can mean that he was recognizing hypochondriasis: “I hear what I look for, for these complaints (physical and mental) always go together. Sickness of the body has been available to the welfare of the mind in many” (II:3; TD IV:13–14).⁵⁹

Adverse Fortune contains thirteen chapters that pertain to what now would fall within the realm of psychology or psychiatry, and a few others that help to explain the author’s opinions therein. The chapters are numbered, but it seems doubtful that this reflects the sequence in which all were composed. The psychiatric content of some are obvious from their titles. Titles of the chapters cited are:

⁵⁶ Cicero TD III:4–5, 233–35.

⁵⁷ Petrarch (see note 38), Fam IX:1, 1–2, to the Lord of Carpi.

⁵⁸ Petrarch (see note 38), Fam X:5.

⁵⁹ Cicero (see note 53), TD IV 13–14: 359–61.

I: 3 Of bodily health

65 The worthiness of marriage

67 A fruitful and elegant wife

68 A great dowry

69 Pleasant love

76 Of second marriage

II: 3 Of sickness

19 the loss of a man's wife

20 The stealing away of a man's wife

21 Of an unchaste wife

22 Of a barren wife

86 Of watching (i.e., insomnia)

87 Of the uniqueness of dreams

92 Of the Plague far and wide raging

93 Of sadness and misery

98 Of the loathsomeness of life

99 Of heaviness of the body" (Addendum 2: depression, not obesity)

100 Of great dullness of wit

101 Of a slender and weak memory

104 Of want of virtue

109 Of sluggishness of the mind

110 Of lechery

111 Of alchemy

114 Of sundry pains and grieving of the whole body

115 Of madness

116 Of poison

118 Of voluntary murdering of man's own self

120 Of death before a man's time

Nothing suggests recognition of hysteria, nor do the ancients. Each chapter is organized as a dialogue between the complaint and its explanation and remedy.

Whatever Petrarch's psychological motivation may have been, his purpose was one of stoic encouragement. For example, he states in the plague chapter: "Fear ought not only to be brought down in valiant minds but also never admitted: for what is less the part of a man than to fear common things."⁶⁰ He does not indicate a cause of the plague, but in a letter to Boccaccio he satirizes astrologers' interpretation of its cause (Sen. III:1).⁶¹

Weyer, on the other hand, states (paraphrased): "The air is known to give off malignant vapors when it is infected during a plague." He does not attrib-

⁶⁰ Cicero (see note 53), TD III:14, 241–43.

⁶¹ Petrarch, *Old Age* (see note 17), Sen I:5, 75–91, to Boccaccio concerning the latest plague. On castigating astrologers, see 80–82.

ute anxiety to the presence of plague, but rather the opportunity for evil people to spread the disease by smearing infectious ointments in places that would be touched by many people.⁶²

Petrarch's "Of Madness" actually focuses on the fear of becoming insane rather than describing many manifestations of insanity. Petrarch is concerned with the apprehension of losing control—of "falling into a frenzy." "Furious licentiousness of their mind may result in fall into stark madness . . ." (TD III–11–12).⁶³ The first cause of madness cited is fear of unbearable pain. This is consistent with Caelius's discussion of phrenitis.⁶⁴ However, loss of various virtues, such as manifested by gluttony or lechery, are most important. The nearest Petrarch comes to describing manifestations of schizophrenia is to assure readers that having kings and queens as your companions, or Ajax and Hercules, etc., should not provoke your anxiety. Rather than schizophrenic delusions, "If it is likely to have come through some vice of the mind, arm it with virtue which is its proper defense, but if of the body you must ask counsel and succor at the hands of the Physicians, which are the governors of men's bodies. But if you have none near you, or if they that profess that science are unskillful in your disease, then I will prescribe this one rule to you: use abstinence and flee all excess" (II:115).

To be consistent with Petrarch's general attitude, the emphasis here should be on the unskillful physician. Petrarch was famous for his self-acknowledged antipathy to physicians, even though he conceded in 1364 that he was friendly with four:

There is no quicker way to health than to do without a doctor . . . Would that they had been healers and not under the guise of healers, enemies of healing, armed not only with true ignorance and the name of, but also with the irrationality and credulousness of the patients who are so influenced by their overwhelming desire for health that whoever promises this quite recklessly is Apollo himself (Sen. V:3).⁶⁵

Various causes of anxiety and depression, including suicidal ideation, receive the most of Petrarch's attention. Regarding hypochondriasis:

⁶² Johann Weyer, *De Praestigiis Daemonum. Devils and Doctors in the Renaissance*, ed. George Mora (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991). On spreading of the plague, see 268–69, 771.

⁶³ Cicero (see note 53), TD III:11–12, 237–39.

⁶⁴ Caelius (see note 22).

⁶⁵ Petrarch, *Old Age* (see note 16), Sen V:3 167–76, to Boccaccio derogating physicians. Quote on 167.

Reason tells the complainant: "I hear that which I look for, for these complaints always go together . . . Sickness of the body has been available to the welfare of the mind in many . . . Boast in your infirmities and accomplish virtue . . . (II:3).

Depression and hypochondriasis are related in the chapter "Of sadness and misery." We find: "Sometimes a man shall perceive no apparent cause at all (of sadness), neither of sickness, nor loss, nor injury, nor shame, nor errors, nor of any sudden rumor of such like matter, but only a certain pleasure to be sorry which makes the soul sad and heavy. This mischief is so much the more hurtful the more the cause is unknown, and the cure more difficult (II:93) (TD–IV:7, 345⁶⁶; TD–II:13, 179–81).⁶⁷

The chapter on suicide differs in that the dialogue is not between *Sorrow* and *Reason*, but between *Fear* and *Reason* (II:118). People are ambivalent about seeking death, but there are many internal reasons why it is considered. According to Cicero: "Suicide may for one man be a duty, for another (under the same circumstances) a crime" (DO I–30).⁶⁸ Actual justifications include "a certain kind of fury against one's self, extreme misery which is desperation about a circumstance "against which no medicine can prevail." These misbelievings may have a sexual basis: "So headlong is your lasciviousness that upon the least cause that may be, you are not only angry with Fortune, but also with yourselves . . .," but also impatience of sickness, severe pain, fear of impending circumstances. Giving in to suicidal fantasies "tastes of effeminate imbecility" (TD III:36).⁶⁹

The chapter on unwillingness to face death, "Of death before a man's time," deals with the opposite of suicide, which here is not alluded to. People regret things that they have not accomplished, or behaviors that may have shortened their life expectancy, and fantasize about projects that they still wish to undertake (II:120) (TD I–46).⁷⁰

Sleep and its disturbances are an important topic. "You spend all your time upon your own destruction, being sorrowful for the time past, careful for the time present, and fearful and trembling for the time to come and you gather onto yourselves handfuls of these superfluous and unnecessary cares: . . . by wakefulness you bring onto yourselves labor and pains, and by sleeping, dreams . . . Is it not also true that when a thousand dreams are seen, yet perhaps not one of them

⁶⁶ Cicero (see note 53), TD IV:7, 345.

⁶⁷ Cicero (See note 53).TD II:13, 179–81

⁶⁸ Cicero (See note 48).DO I:30, 115.

⁶⁹ Cicero (see note 53). TD III:36, 271.

⁷⁰ Cicero (see note 53).TD I:46, 131.

is true? . . . Despite all this foolishness (i.e., dreaming) you shall take your rest” (II:87). Pertaining to insomnia, we learn:

Sleep must be provoked again, not by force, but by fair means. If you think to procure it, it will not be constrained. Go some other way to work, give rest to your head, and trouble not your mind with cares and it will come not unlooked for: when the mind is loose and the body weary sleep will come stealing on (II:86).

Sleep elicits dreams, and dreams may bring forth cares that are suppressed when awake. However, they should not be of concern because they are unlikely to be true. Short shrift is made of the etiology of dreams: “It is fruitless to torment your life and make it troublesome through your own folly, to disquiet your rest with dreadful dreams . . .” Insomnia and nightmares are recognized to occur to everyone and are not harmful: “Neither shall you be terrified with dreadful dreams, nor surprised with sudden fear in the night . . . What others have felt and suffered everyone is privy to himself and can call his own bed to witness the illusions and troubles he has suffered” (II:86).

Petrarch considers concerns about normal and borderline states of mind. One should not sleep too long or too briefly. Sleeping not as long as one would like may indicate that you are lying down longer than your body requires and, furthermore, older people require less sleep. Deteriorating memory “is another infamy of old age.” His advice is the same as is given nowadays: “correct it by means of study. . . . Industry helps all faults of wit and memory. . . . That which you should do tomorrow, do it today.” Examples are given of distinguished work done by famous men in their old age. (II:101, DO I:34).⁷¹ Belief that one is dull-witted “is something troublesome, but it may be much diminished if you apply yourself diligently there unto. However, if you are incapable of learning then be virtuous, for it is a higher matter to be ennobled by virtue than by learning.” (II:109) Since madness is manifested by loss of the ability to perceive what is true and real, the victim should seek to heal himself by amending his behavior and thought, preferably without the help of physicians or clergy (TD III–6).⁷²

Self-cure is reinforced in another of Petrarch’s chapters: *Sorrow*. “I am very far from the health of mind which you pretend, and am greatly in doubt whether pain may be assuaged and taken away by them all, or whether they are words that only fill the mind and delight the ear but not at all appease grief.” *Reply*. Words, I confess, do not heal the body, unless peradventure enchantments and old wives

⁷¹ Cicero (see note 53), TD III:6, 231.

⁷² Cicero (see note 53), TD III:2–3, 229.

charms deserve any credit. Nevertheless they cure diseases of the mind whose good health verily extinguishes or appeals all bodily pain" (II:114; TD III:2–3).⁷³

The passages most relevant to psychotherapy occur in this chapter ("Of sundry pains and griefs of the whole body") and the chapter entitled "Of sadness and misery." In the former: "You should now consider what cause you have to be sorrowful . . . which mischief is so much the more hurtful by as much as the cause is the more unknown, and the cure the more difficult." And in the latter chapter: "There is no force of the body so great, so likewise there is no strength of the mind of such power which with a sudden and heavy burden not quaver and bend . . . (TD III:14).⁷⁴ Give your mind space to refresh itself and to show forth its own strength in the present danger" (II:114).

Petrarch appears to be remarkably anti-clerical while being a friend of bishops and cardinals. Paraphrased, he states: "Your churches have ordered you to pray for assistance against suicidal thoughts to the blessed saints in heaven who, being discharged from the earthly weariness and constraints of the body, now rest in the joys of heaven in everlasting felicity. I doubt not, truly, but that some of them are at rest indeed, but as for those of your prayers to them, I count them vain and foolish" (II:113). The patrons of plague, St. Sebastian and St. Roche, became associated with the disease after Petrarch's lifetime.

We need to stress that Petrarch never attributes any of the travails of mankind, whether physical like toothache, or mental such as nightmares, or any other misfortune to the devil, or possession by demons. And demonic explanations were well established in the culture. They began to be converted from folklore to writing by St. Augustine (354–430) in the fifth century. The execution of heretics was authorized by Pope (then Saint) Leo I in mid-fifth century, but the question of what qualified as heresy varied for the next twelve centuries.⁷⁵ Charlemagne (742–814) in the early ninth century prohibited practice of the "pagan custom" of burning witches, while also decreeing capital punishment for anyone "who in any way evoked the devil"⁷⁶ Physical ailments should be dealt with by a physician and problems that are perceived to be mental by adhering to virtuous behavior. Such behavior is a matter of free will: ". . . good will is the root of virtue, as an evil will is the root of vice" (II:113).

⁷³ Cicero (see note 53), TD III:14, 241–43.

⁷⁴ *Carus Devil* (see note 7), on the execution of heretics, see 308–28.

⁷⁵ Trevor-Roper (see note 12). *Witch-Craze: On Charlemagne*, 92.

⁷⁶ Helen R. Lemay, "Masculinity and Femininity in Early Renaissance Treatises on Human Reproduction." *Clio Medica* 18 (1983): 21–31.

Sexual Behavior and Marriage

Albertus Magnus died only one generation before Petrarch was born, in 1280. His biologic speculations on differences in the biology of the human sexes and human reproduction stimulated considerations by various medical and philosophical authors.⁷⁷ In Petrarch's time these were represented roughly by an Aristotelian "philosophic" school and a Galenic "medical" school. According to Galenic teaching both sexes potentially contribute seed to reproduction, but orgasm and its associated pleasure is required for the woman to release hers, while according to Aristotle seed is only a male product, and female pleasure therefore is irrelevant to reproduction.

There was agreement that women are inferior to men, but the explanations and implications of this difference varied. In view of Petrarch's anti-Aristotelian inclination as well as his fear of feminine striving (*vide infra*) he may be considered in the "medical" camp. The Galenic assertion⁷⁸ that women are inferior to men is that they are "colder," but also "moister" was generally accepted. The discussions were about the explanation of this alleged fact. Bullough reprinted the key passage from May's translation of *De Usu Partium* and discussed it in relation to Aristotle's hypotheses.⁷⁹ It was uncertain whether there is an overlap, whether the warmest women are warmer than the coldest men.⁷⁹

To maintain a state of *eucrasia*, or good humor, women must lose sufficient moisture with menstrual and other vaginal fluids. They also by nature seek coitus because it helps to diminish excess moisture.⁷⁸ Men, however, because they are "drier" should moderate their sexual activity because seminal discharges have a desiccating effect. Furthermore, according to Aristotle, "animals that copulate frequently age quickly, and further, the seed being lost produces dryness."⁸⁰

77 Galen, *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body. De Usu Partium* trans. by Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968). Book 7, 382 and Book 14, 628: "The female is less perfect than the male for one principal reason—because she is colder." Joyce E. Salisbury, "Gendered Sexuality," *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 81–102.

78 Vern L. Bullough, "Marriage in the Middle Ages. 5. Medical and Scientific Views of Women," *Viator* 4 (1973): 485–501.

79 Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman. A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life*. (London and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1980), Chap. 3: "Medicine, Anatomy, Physiology," 28–46.

80 Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). "On the length and shortness of life." Section 5, 743 in I:740–44.

Therefore, in the wording of Robert Burton (1576–1640), paraphrased: “Intemperate Venus” is as bad as its absence. Galen (and other experts) reckon melancholy among those diseases which are exaggerated by venery, because it refrigerates and dries up the body, consumes the spirits; therefore all who are cold and dry to take heed of and avoid it as a mortal enemy. Authors from the fourth century (Oribasius) to the sixteenth (Girolamo Mercurialis) have found that in women both lack of menses and lack of coition result in various manifestations of melancholy.⁸¹ Prior to Oribasius, Celsus, for example, had advocated sexual moderation without invoking a pathophysiology based on considerations of “dryness” and “moisture” (Addendum 4). Consequently, for the sake of men’s health, women’s sex drive needs to be kept in check.

Petrarch never married, so his opinions suggest personal apprehension encompassing its economic, intellectual, and especially sexual components. The most important absences from these wide ranging discussions are considerations of women’s point of view.

“Pleasant Love” is one of the longest chapters (7 ½ pages) in *Physic against Fortune*. Petrarch concedes the reality of love during courtship, as long as it is mutual (TD IV–12).⁸² However, love is one of the factors that “creates effeminacy and weakens the most valiant men,” and “Effeminacy is an infirmity of some men’s minds that make them unable to bear any adversities This is what forces out of men unseemly howling and womanish and effeminate voices” (TD III–36).⁸³ After the completion of (or: after completing) *Physic against Fortune* Petrarch reiterated: “A mind controlled by love is not independent, and you should not believe one who loves any more than one who hates.”⁸⁴

The girl/woman is portrayed as the persuader. “It is not a hard matter to persuade one that is willing” But the woman is likely to be unscrupulous in the relationship, and the man foolish. “The more pleasantly you burn, the more warily you should avoid the fire.” But you follow those things that shall perish with you and covering your filthy (i.e., sexual) affections with an honest cloak you term lechery love, which you worship So, then play, rejoice in your mad sleep, and you shall weep when you awake The madness of lovers is wonderful, not only among the common people . . . , but also among the best learned in

81 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy. Now for the First Time with the Latin Completely Given in Translation and Embodied in an All-English Text*. Floyd Dell, ed. (New York: Tudor Publishing Co, 1948): Pertaining to venery see 204–05, 405–06.

82 Cicero (see note 53). TD IV:12, 355.

83 Cicero (see note 53). TD III:36, 169.

84 Petrarch *Old Age* (see note 11), to Francesco Bruni, Sen I:6, 27–30; here 28.

both tongues (Latin & Greek) We speak now of none other than the libidinous and sensual love which cannot possibly be without many of these and other great evils” (DO I–30⁸⁵; DO III–33).⁸⁶ “Neither nature, or destiny or stars bear any sway in this matter, and finally nothing but only lightheadedness and free judgment of the mind (I:69). According to Cicero, there is a category of diseases whose etiology is “lust and delight.” They include among others “love of women” and intoxication (TD IV–12).⁸⁷ Nevertheless, “There ought to be like duty, equal love and mutual fidelity in marriage. When this is lost I give husbands the greatest part of the blame.” This is because more seriousness is expected of a man: “all folly and lightheadedness of mind is so much more foul in a man than in a woman” (II:21).

Marriage usually is an adversarial relationship in which the husband is continually at risk of losing dominance. “Among the mischiefs of this life there are none worse than domestic disagreement” (II:20). The chief dowry of women should be “faith, chastity and modesty” (II:18). However, “a great dowry,” that is, the wife’s economic dominance, “is the wife’s liberty and the husband’s bridle How much better were it to live quietly with a poor wife than to be troubled with a proud one, and to be hungry with a poor wench that is humble than to live brawling with a rich and insolent peacock” (I:68). The possibility that a woman might be intellectually superior is conceded with the recommendation “Let your wife who lies by your side not be a Rhetorician or a Logician. You sought a wife and have found a schoolmistress, controlling and mocking” (I:67). “A good wife, or rather, a good woman, is a rare and (Addendum 6) strange creature on the earth I would not have you often to assay so dangerous a matter (as marriage) which, although once happily chanced, yet were it folly to venture many times He that has had a good wife let him not hope for the like, but let them both take heed: he one that he not increase his misery, the other that he not impair his felicity”(II:18).

“What manner of woman the wife is should be the most important. Among the burdens of the world there is none more odious than a saucy woman, or one that cannot hold her tongue.” When a man is widowed “You have gotten the upper hand in a dangerous conflict and are delivered from a long siege.” “If you have lost a good wife rejoice for that which is past rather than conceive hope for what is to come The widower should be consoled by the circumstance of having “found your liberty, a single life, peace, sleep, quietness You have lost an adversary.”(II:18) And even the kidnapping of one’s wife is not necessarily a

⁸⁵ Cicero (see note 48), DO I:30:109

⁸⁶ Cicero, (see note 48), DO III:33:399–401.

⁸⁷ Cicero (see note 53), TD IV:12, 355.

misfortune, for it may rid you of an unwanted burden. The kidnapper will be punished soon enough by being annoyed by her as you had been (II:20). If you have a wife who loves you ardently, it would be preferable if she loved you chastely, virtuously and modestly. For what is ardent love but a fire of the mind and, while it burns, what can be left of conjugal respect, tranquility and quiet thought? Your wife may love you ardently, but if she does not feel loved in return, she will cool down, her love will turn into hate . . . [You must] devote yourself only to your beloved, be the wakeful husband to a jealous wife, aroused and bothered all night long, now by her alluring entreaties, now by complaints and false accusations” (I:65). For it is in the choice of him that is sick (with love) to be made whole so soon as he begins to have a will to be whole and can find in his heart to break off the pleasant links of their sweet company, which is a hard matter to do. “As contraries best cure the diseases of the body, so will they excellently remedy the mind also, as sickness, deformity, poverty, great business and old age, which is a worthy reformer of the errors of youth. These are my last remedies, which are hard indeed, but in respect of the greatness of the plague (of love) to be wished” (I:69).

There is a peculiar similarity between Petrarch and Weyer in their fear of the sexuality of older women, except that for Weyer the undesirable behavior implies the intercession of witchcraft. Petrarch asks: “Are you not sufficiently acquainted with the manners of women? How many chaste young women do we see to become wanton old wives? For when the heat of lechery once takes hold in the bones of an old jade [wench] it burns more violently. . . . The yoke of marriage is grievous to young men, but most grievous, hard and unsupportable for old men... If you were desirous that she should come to that age when she should be unfit for them both (pregnancy and intercourse) could be achieved by old age, this truly would be a vain expectation and a foolish hope There is nothing softer than an empty bed, (nor harder when it is filled by two)—especially for a busy mind that loves sweet sleep and rest in the contemplation of some great and excellent matter of the mind, for there is nothing more inimical to noble projects than the company of a woman.” (II:18) “. . . You have lost your wife and found your liberty, a single life, peace, sleep, quietness. Now you shall pass through the night without brawling.” “If you have complained of your wife’s lustfulness, do not find fault with her childlessness.” A childless marriage may not be due to a wife’s sterility. “Do not project your own fault to another. Many women being married to some one man have seemed barren, but when they have been married to other men have had children” (II:22).

If you knew thoroughly what a woman is . . . you would not have married the first time . . . However, whether youthful desire or lecherous old age stirs your lust, of which there is nothing more filthy, it would be better (than remarrying), were it not sinful, or forbidden by

the law of God, to remedy the matter by keeping a concubine than that a quiet house be disturbed by the tempests and hatred of stepmothers That [female] sex doubtless ought to be the greater preserver of chastity and honesty, notwithstanding that there is more wisdom and steadfastness required of men (I:76).

Weyer is concerned about assigning blame for impotence and frigidity and attributes the sexual needs of nuns to demonic invasion. Petrarch finds that “the unhappy, infatuated minds (of virginal nuns) are not safe from this unbridled, raging lust which does not fear God’s retribution. Whom will it spare if it does not respect the bodies consecrated to God?” (II:21). “Admit that sensual passion is not caused by nature, or fate, or stars, or anything else, but by a giddy head and wanton notions. Because it is the patient’s decision to become well again, to want to regain his confidence and to break the sweet fetters of alluring indulgence—which certainly is difficult, but nevertheless possible if he really wants to do it” (I:69).

Although lust, “doubtless is the gift of God” its abuse is due to “a great perversity of the will. Whether you carnally desire or not, continence is a token of fervent good will” (II:104) (DO I:29).⁸⁸ Petrarch’s attitude to sexuality, while consistent with Catholic teaching, unequivocally follows Cicero in praising the virtue of abnegation. According to DO II 10⁸⁹ “Sensual pleasure, a most seductive mistress, turns the hearts of the greater part of humanity away from virtue” Petrarch paraphrases this: “Pleasures, being most flattering ladies, wrest the greater part of the mind from virtue.” And in *Of want of virtue*: “The chiefest part of virtue consists in your will Whether you carnally desire or not the effect will prove: Continence is a token of fervent good will” (DO–III:33).⁹⁰ The chapter “Of Lechery” concludes “Perhaps the pleasure of one brief moment shall be punished with the repentance of many years and peradventure with everlasting damnation” (II:110), a statement from which the nineteenth-century cautionary medical axiom “One night with Venus and a lifetime with Mercury” (i.e., mercurial treatment) might have been derived.

Nothing that can happen to man should be lamented, but rather anticipated (II:49). Numerous examples of loss are presented with reasons not to grieve, that now seem ironic. Death of one’s wife is an extreme example in its repetitive disparagement of marriage, much of which is reiterated in the chapter on second marriage.(I:76) It is best to abstain from remarrying because, if indeed you sur-

⁸⁸ Cicero (see note 48), DO I:29, 103.

⁸⁹ Cicero (see note 48), DO II:10, 205.

⁹⁰ Cicero (see note 48), DO III:33, 399–401.

prisingly found a good wife once, the chance of this happening again is minimal. The complaint of now being alone is irrational: “It is a good solitude to be without evil company . . .”

In dealing with sexual matters, Weyer has only a few points in common with Petrarch. He states: “Nothing is more violent than the frenzy of love” (571); and in ridiculing aphrodisiacs: “You have the true philtre whereby a woman is wont to overcome her husband—a kind and friendly manner. And indeed these are the truly magical inducements to love . . .” (278). However, his main sexual concern is whether impotence or frigidity can be induced by witchcraft. Concerning frigid individuals and victims of witchcraft who are incapable of sexual functions: “This flaw should not always be ascribed to enchantment nor should an innocent person at once be put under burden of suspicion (for having induced the defect). Just as I certainly admit that the genitals can be rendered unsuitable for intercourse by a demon, so do I resolutely deny that this can be done by the ill will and the vapid imprecations of a vile old woman The demon requires the help of no second party in this activity” (334).

Johann Weyer and “The Deception of Demons”

Johann Weyer (1515–1588) was of Dutch birth, but received his medical degree in France in 1537 from the University of Orleans. From 1550 on, thus while he composed *The Deception of Demons*, Weyer resided in Jülich, a ducal seat located between Aachen and Cologne.⁹¹ Medically he was an orthodox Galenist, meaning that all bodily abnormalities are believed to reflect that one or more of the four cardinal humors are out of their proper place in quantity and/or quality—a state of *dyscrasia*. His fame rests on his denunciation of the prevalent beliefs in the causation of otherwise unexplained phenomena by the devil and demons, both in regard to human behavior and phenomena of nature.

Weyer regarded himself a paragon of objectivity: “I am neither a superstitious man nor a lover of tales—I am eager for the truth” (420). Or: “I do not make light of chemistry, which is an important part of medicine, and which I value highly” (154). He, no doubt, was referring to the alchemy that Petrarch had considered fraudulent two centuries earlier, as he was unable to extricate himself from his native culture. Execution for witchcraft only became commonplace in the thirteenth-century.⁹² The importance that was accorded to devils, demons,

⁹¹ Weyer, *De Praestigiis* (see note 61), Introduction.

⁹² Carus, *Devil* (see note 7), 308–26.

and witchcraft in the culture into which Weyer was born is indicated by the fact that intercession by such creatures was considered of such heretical significance that Pope Innocent VIII (1432–1492) in 1484 published a bull whereby witchcraft was criminalized, analogous to the action of the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne seven centuries earlier:

We, as is our duty, being wholly desirous of removing all hindrances and obstacle by which the good work of the Inquisitors may be let and tarried, as also applying potent remedies to prevent the disease of heresy and other turpitudes We decree and enjoin the aforesaid Inquisitors be empowered to proceed to the just correction, imprisonment, and punishment of any persons without let or hindrance.

This bull is available in English in Montague Summers's edition of *The Malleus Maleficarum*⁹³ and in Zilboorg's *Medical Man and the Witch*.⁹⁴ The principal specified manifestations of Devil's activity were alleged interference with agricultural production and breeding, and to "hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving, whence husbands cannot know their wives nor wives receive their husbands."

Three years after promulgation of this bull, two German Dominican clerics who, as "Our dear sons," had been appointed as inquisitors by the Pope published *Malleus Maleficarum* that became the textbook for the iniquities of the Inquisition. It received ten Latin printings between 1489 and 1661.⁹⁵ This diatribe was followed in 1532 by the comprehensive "Carolina" legal code of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500–1558) that contained clauses pertaining to witchcraft. Punishment was mandated both for teaching witchcraft and for making a false accusation of its practice. However, at least the latter was not adjudicated as intended. This is according to the paragraph on Penalty for Witchcraft numbered both #98 and #109 (see addendum 6):

If someone did injury or damage to people through witchcraft, she must be punished from life to death, and this punishment must be done by burning. But where someone uses witchcraft without causing injury, she should be punished in another way, according to the magnitude of the crime; here the advice of the council should be followed⁹⁶ (Addendum 6)

⁹³ Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (1928; New York: Dover Publications, 1971), Bull of Innocent VIII, see XLIII–XLV.

⁹⁴ Zilboorg, *Medical Man* (see note 4). Bull of Innocent VIII, see 17–22.

⁹⁵ Summers, *Malleus* (see note 93). On editions of *Malleus Maleficarum*, see XLI–XLII.

⁹⁶ Binz, *Doctor Weyer* (see note 6). On articles of the Carolina Code, see 58.

Weyer also quotes articles no.17, no. 35, no. 42. These deal with false accusations of witchcraft, suspicion that is sufficient to begin questioning, and follow-up to results of interrogation, such as from whom the admitted witchcraft was learned. (489–92). Weyer specifically attacks the *Hammer of Witches* as being “in violation of Christ’s clear teaching” (432). Apparently, his Protestant conversion never was acknowledged, and when it took place is uncertain.

Weyer was disappointed by the subservience to the Inquisition by more liberal clergy: “. . . the milder bishops shrank back from this savage confiscation, imprisonment, punishment, and burning—savagery which now is the overriding pleasure, indeed the sole pleasure of certain individuals, especially from the ranks of those who profess the perfection of Christian piety, those whose one aim should be to heal rather than to kill, and to soften by their intercession the strict interpretation of the law. Now these masters of clemency even go beyond the edicts of the princes in their savagery” (531). Withington describes the kinds of torture and the ease with which one could become a victim.⁹⁷ The intensity of the witch hunts varied considerably, corresponding mainly to the attitude of the local lord. Demonology and the sacrifice of “witches” became the most severe in southern German lands (Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden). There was little in the jurisdiction in which Weyer lived (Northwestern Germany), while it was severe a hundred miles south-east in Württemberg. It reached its peak in the two centuries after Weyer’s incriminations of the practices.

Lyndal Roper has collected data based on execution records relevant to Weyer’s repeated allusions to witches being *old* women, “Old” could mean post-menopausal, or certainly any woman who was believed to be in her sixth decade. Of 255 persons of known age who were executed for witchcraft in Würzburg at the end of the sixteenth century 190 were women, of whom 140 were over forty and 112 were over fifty years of age. In the Saar district 85% were over forty and half were over fifty.⁹⁸

My citations are taken from the modern translation of the 1589 fourth edition. This treatise largely is a multi-faceted defense of individuals, mainly elderly women, who have been accused of being *lamiae* (witches). Weyer repeatedly emphasizes that witches predominantly are *old* women “who by virtue of a deceptive or imaginary pact that they have entered into with the demon, supposedly perpetrate all kinds of evil-doing . . . (166). He explains this, as well as alleging

⁹⁷ Edward T. Withington, “Dr. John Weyer and the Witch Mania,” *Studies in the History and Method of Science*, ed. Charles Singer, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), Vol. 1, 89–224.,

⁹⁸ Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004). On “old women” being identified as witches, see 160–64.

their more rapid onset of senility than occurs in men: “The women of whom we speak have usually reached the second stage of old age, the part which is called decrepit. It is in itself a disease and it is almost always accompanied by mental folly and failure of judgment Our old women not only grow feeble-minded, just as men do—that is, in the second and final stage of old age—but they become even more childish, or at least they are no less childish in the first stage than men are in the second and final stage” (574). Contrariwise, Petrarch advises a technique to stave off senility (II:101).

Weyer’s twentieth-century psychiatric prominence is embodied in his statements about and description of behavior of alleged witches that are understandable in modern psychiatric terms, while they also demonstrate his inability to entirely detach himself from the belief in demons. The capacity to perceive these sensations is congenitally transmitted to the fetus from its mother. Persons who are suspected of being bewitched really suffer from distortions of their imagination. Whether such distortions are achieved by the devil by insinuating himself into his victim’s imagination receives extensive discussion. The four types of perceivable emotions are appetite, pleasure, fear and sorrow. Fear is defined as “mental trepidation because of future peril . . .” (570). However,

Of all things that are deservedly feared, even by the most stalwart person, physical torture, violent death, and natural death, some are truly attempted and threatened by the demon in the case of these wretched old women, and some are presented and suggested to the women’s captive minds in such a misleading way that when the demon feigns power over all these forces he compels the women to think that they are doing anything whatsoever or that they are having it done to them.

In Cicero’s words,

The brave man is also self-reliant . . . The self-reliant man, however, is assuredly not excessively fearful; for there is a difference between confidence and timidity. And yet the man who is accessible to distress is also accessible to fear . . . It is therefore probable that the man who is susceptible to distress is also susceptible to fear, and indeed of dejection and depression. (TD III–7).⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the devil corrupts . . . men’s minds with various mocking phantoms, to throw the wakeful into confusion, to terrify the sleeping with dreams . . . to make men quake with fear, to entwine and entangle many matters in the inextricable labyrinths of opinion . . .” (34).

Melancholia develops “when the melancholic humor that originates in the spleen seizes the brain and alters the mind . . . (183). All the senses are corrupted in

⁹⁹ Cicero (see note 48), TD III:14, 241–43.

various ways by this one humor or by the sooty vapor of black bile which infects the abode of the mind and from which proceed all those fantastical monstrosities” (186). This is a satisfactory humoral explanation. However, it is embellished by Weyer: “The melancholic humor (into which the demon loves to insinuate himself) . . . is a material suited for his activities . . .” The depraved imagination of melancholics (may result) in foolish and deranged behavior, and also the occasional serious, grievous and frightful things that they do. Such persons are often judged to be either stupid or possessed by demons—just as possessed persons are often called melancholic. So there is need for careful judgment here to distinguish between the two afflictions. Not all melancholics are driven by demons, however it usually happens that all possessed persons are rendered melancholic because of their bitter torments and grievous afflictions” (346).

While we use the term “melancholia” colloquially as a synonym for depression, Weyer under this heading gives excellent descriptions of paranoid schizophrenia. For example, “Many imagine that they are guilty of a crime and they tremble and shudder when they see anyone approaching them for fear that the person lay hands upon them and lead them off as prisoners and haul them before tribunals to be punished” (183). Others fear death and yet sometimes they choose death by committing suicide.

Another example of “melancholia”: A woman would cry out that her husband smelled of sulfur and pitch, and she would judge that food set before her tasted of pepper though both of these observations were known to be untrue. She similarly maintains that her private parts were so inflamed and ill-smelling that she was very much afraid that gangrene would set in, though these parts were free of any impairment” (185).

In another case manic psychosis is described: A man believed that he and he alone was emperor of the whole world, while in other aspects he was well off and suffered no other malady. He composed verses about the state of Christianity and religious disputes as though they were divine proclamations. (183).

Weyer discusses mind-altering herbs such as opium, mandrake, cannabis and nightshade. “If I have established that a profound sleep is produced by the power of the ointment, and that such dream-images are meanwhile imprinted by the Devil, how can anyone claim that the imagination is unimpaired in these cases?” (554–55). Toxic effects cannot be attributed to the herb alone, but require demonic intercession. Assuming that the ointment contains “manic” nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), Dioscorides (first century C.E.)¹⁰⁰ informs us that one dram

100 Pedanius Dioscorides, *The Greek Herbal of Dioscorides*. English Translation from 1655 by John Goodyer and Robert T. Gunther (1934; New York: Hafner, 1959), 65: *Papaver somniferum*

of the root of this plant taken in wine elicits empty forms and images of a not unpleasant kind; but a double dosage brings mental disorientation for three whole days” (230). The dose-related hallucinatory effect of various drugs related to atropine (e.g., henbane, mandrake) are well known to modern toxicology.¹⁰¹ Of course, absorption through the skin, as Weyer supposes, would be less predictable than if taken orally. Weyer focuses on the characteristics of poisoners: “Women have from the beginning been more prone than men to use poison” (560). “Any women who by the power of some poison bring disease or death upon another, or loss of property, deserve the name of poisoner . . .” (559).

Punishment of male poisoners is not even mentioned, perhaps because the main cause of poisoning is women’s desire to be rid of their husbands. Weyer advises seeking the help of a physician once poisoning is suspected. He does not specifically mention theriac, but after obtaining “an understanding of the nature of the poison the physician will employ the most skillful and exact counteragents and whatever their art dictates” (475). The favorite poison appears to have been aconite, extracted from the roots of monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*). Weyer stated that it was already cited as a poison by the philosopher Diodorus in the fourth-century B.C.E. (560).

According to Petrus Aponensis (1250–1315), a physician and professor in Padua, in his encyclopedic *Conciliator* (1303) the juice, fruit or substance of napellus will in the space of one to three days cause death and in the mean time syncope and failure of the heart.”¹⁰² It indeed is cardiotoxic. A thorough botanical and historical summary appears in Grieve’s *A Modern Herbal*.¹⁰³ Petrarch does not deal with drug induced hallucinations and does not identify particular poisonous substances. Indeed, he does not consider herbal therapeutics beyond stating: “the potency of herbs growing in the soil is useful for a sick body” (Fam. X:5).¹⁰⁴ And in (Sen. V:3), a letter to Boccaccio in late 1364: “We have indeed heard

(Opium Poppy), 71: *Solanum nigrum* (Garden Nightshade); 74: *Datura stramonium* (Horn-Apple); 76: *Atropa mandragora* (Mandrake); 78: *Aconitum* or *Napellus* (Wolfbane); 165: *Cannabis sativa* (Hemp).

101 Sven Moeschlin. *Poisoning. Diagnosis and Treatment*, trans. Jenifer Bickel from the 4th German ed. (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1965), 514, 532–33.

102 Horace M. Brown, “De Venenis of Petrus Abbonus. Edition of MCDXCVIII,” *Annals of Medical History* 6 (1924): 25–53; for *Napellus*, see 43.

103 Maud Grieve, *A Modern Herbal: The Medicinal, Culinary, Cosmetic and Economic Properties, Cultivation and Folk-Lore of Herbs, Grasses, Fungi, Shrubs & Trees with all their Modern Scientific Uses*.

Two volumes (1931; New York: Dover Publications, 1971), for aconite, see I:6–11

104 Petrarch, *Rerum Fam* (see note 37), Fam . X:5, to Gherardo. On useful herbs, see 78.

of certain harmful plants and poisonous herbs, but who, I ask, has ever planted them in his own garden except to harm others, and who has not relentlessly uprooted them when they grow wild?”¹⁰⁵

Petrarch cites circumstances to be avoided and only implies that fears of being poisoned may be irrational. “The electuary of Mithridates” (theriac), then considered to be the universal antidote, is ineffective (II:116). This was another iconoclastic conclusion in which he agrees with Pliny, but no other authority: “Poison is in love with gold and precious stones, against which most wretched plagues neither the electuary of Mithridates, King of Pontus, nor any other, be he never so cunning, is more effective than poverty.”¹⁰⁶ (Addendum 3) As with the unavoidable death from plague, be satisfied that you come into the category of distinguished people who died of poison, such as Socrates (ignoring that Socrates committed suicide). The topic of poisons presents a clear example of the different approaches of the two authors.

Petrarch focuses on the fear of being poisoned and on wealth that, because it elicits the sin of envy, is the main cause of being at risk. The surest preventive against being poisoned is to be poor, the same argument he gives for the prevention of gout, the disease associated with wealth. In a long letter to the gouty uncle of Cardinal Colonna (1338) Petrarch advises voluntary poverty. “If you would banish the gout, banish rich things; if you would expel every ill, expel riches.”¹⁰⁷ In the words of Cicero: “If we will only bear in mind the superiority and dignity of our nature, we shall realize how wrong it is to abandon ourselves to excess and to live in luxury and voluptuousness, and how right it is to live in thrift, self-denial, simplicity, and sobriety” (DO I:30).¹⁰⁸ While self-control is important to both Petrarch and Weyer and for Petrarch poverty assists in achieving this, Weyer does not discuss the causes or virtues of poverty.

Weyer considers the susceptibility to nefarious forces similar to response to a physician. “The effect of constant gullibility among the common folk is quite well known. Superstition requires gullibility, just as true religion requires faith. Such is the power of obstinate credulity that miracles are thought to be performed when erroneous beliefs join with deceiving actions” (415). “. . . Just as we observe the power of medication sometimes to grow stronger as a result of the patient’s

105 Petrarca, *Old Age* (see note 16), Sen V:3 167–76. On toxic herbs, see 169.

106 Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham and William Henry Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), Vol. 8: 199, Book 29:24–25.

107 Thomas G. Benedek and Gerald P. Rodnan, “Petrarch on Medicine and the Gout,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 37 (1963): 397–416.

108 Cicero (see note 48), DO I:30, 109

confidence in the doctor, so too some singular energy results from the belief superstitiously accorded to such (demonic) incantations" (414). Nevertheless, ". . . it is his (the devil's) practice to corrupt men's minds with various mocking phantoms, to throw the wakeful into confusion, to terrify the sleeping with dreams, etc." With all the power that Weyer, albeit reluctantly, accords to the devil, he places himself in a religious quandary, in view of the ultimate superiority of God. This difficulty is resolved with statements such as: "God allows Satan to be effective and to have the power to deceive amongst the children of corruption, filth and disbelief" (448).

For Weyer ignorant physicians are perpetuators of witchcraft because, when they are unable to make a natural diagnosis they attribute the ailment to bewitchment. He devotes a chapter (11–18) to deriding the anti-Galenist physician Paracelsus (1493–1541) and his followers, who ". . . have committed to memory the foul sayings of an insane man . . ." (153). In criticizing the Paracelsian treatment, Weyer says: ". . . Satan, that relentless impostor . . . was easily able to blind the eyes of the Paracelsists with his rubbish—they had already been clouded by the soot of chemistry." Weyer does not specify which part of chemistry he considers "an important part of medicine," but he abhorred the therapeutic use of metals which he (correctly) considered poisonous.¹⁰⁹ Paracelsus was deemed "insane" especially for denying the four cardinal humors, for which he substituted three elements, confusingly called sulfur, salt and mercury. In his system each organ was influenced by a member of the solar system, the brain being under the influence of the moon. Thus he coined the term *lunacy* for the illness caused by the "power of attraction possessed by the moon, which tears reason out of man's head by depriving him of humors and cerebral virtues."¹¹⁰

However, even the most skilled physicians . . . are quite often circumvented by demonic activities." For example, a twenty-year-old girl who had allegedly remained awake for eleven nights was administered a sleeping pill by a renowned physician who had diagnosed melancholia. She then mocked the doctor by

109 Allen G. Debus, "Paracelsianism and the Diffusion of the Chemical Philosophy in Early Modern Europe," 225–44 in Ole Peter Grell, *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation, His Ideas and Their Transformation*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 85 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998), 225–44.

110 George Mora, "Paracelsus' Psychiatry: On the Occasion of the 400th Anniversary of his book 'Diseases that deprive man of his reason' (1567)," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 124 (1967): 803–14. See also the contributions to this volume by Andrew Weeks and Thomas Willard. Cf. also the articles in *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

closing one eye with her finger and saying, “See how I am now sleeping!” At this the doctor asserted correctly that the girl had been overcome and possessed by a demon who had mocked him. The doctor concluded that the demon perceives men’s thoughts, because he had not disclosed to anyone that he was about to administer a sleeping pill. Without discounting the demon, Weyer disagreed: The demon, being a keen observer, inferred that the doctor must be preparing a soporific medicine. Therefore “he seized the opportunity and it was not difficult for him to delude and mock the physician” (326–27). The supernatural effect was transferred from patient to physician. The possibility that the “renowned physician” had prepared an ineffective medicine or had not waited long enough to determine its effect were not considered.

The London physician Thomas Sydenham (1624–1689) in 1681 rejected the ancient “wandering womb” etiology of hysteria because the disease usually is caused by “over-ordinate commotions of the mind.”¹¹¹ A century earlier Weyer also did not allude to the wandering womb, but etiologically did no better. He described a case of mass hysteria in a cloister, manifested by the development of torticollis (wry-neck) among a group of nuns that was attributed to a demonic potion that had been spread in their vegetable garden. (509). An incident in another nunnery could even more clearly be attributed to sexual frustration. A nun in her twenties was often subjected while in bed to mocking illusions with licentious laughter which she unsuccessfully tried to suppress. Her roommate “finally too became an abode for the Devil, and she was torn by dreadful convulsions, sometimes becoming blind during the onset. Although her mind appeared to be stable, she uttered wildly inconsistent remarks verging on despair. “Many other nuns were similarly affected and the plague spread like a contagion.” The initiating nun “who was the object of the demon’s love had written some frightful letters (later discovered) to her suitor. There is no reason for anyone to doubt that they had been composed by her when she was in a state of possession and not in control of her senses” (311).

Another more detailed case report particularly impugns Weyer’s alleged psychiatric insight. A 20 year old girl was weak due to a prolonged fever from which she seemed to be recovering on July 2, 1562. According to her subsequent recollection she was holding a knife when an unknown woman briefly stopped by to inquire about her health, and, after her departure, she saw a large black dog. She

¹¹¹ Thomas Sydenham, *The Works of Thomas Sydenham M.D.*, ed. William A. Greenhill and Robert G. Latham (London: Sydenham Society, 1848), *Epistolary Dissertation* nos. 58–78, in Vol. II:84–90.

later recalled that she felt a cold sensation from her head down her back just after the dog left and she then lost consciousness for three days. When she awoke she had localized pain between the 10th and 11th ribs on the left side. She insisted that the pain was caused by the knife which she now could not find and hence must be inside her. Over some days the intensity of the pain varied but caused her to walk with a cane, bent over (a manifestation of hysteria called *camptocormia*). A swelling developed at the site of the pain, recognized to be an abscess. On June 30, 1563 this came to a point and ruptured, draining pus. A surgeon was called who, after a clergyman had at his request elicited her history, on July 4 appeared to withdraw a partially corroded knife, after which the ulcerated site healed. The rapid healing proves that these inner organs were not injured and the Devil had no wish to impede this healing.

According to Weyer's tortuous interpretation, the disease was caused by "melancholic humor putrefied within the body" which is a frequent cause of "obstruction, swelling and hardness of the spleen." Her brain also became affected by this humor. So far we have a reasonable humoral pathogenesis which Weyer concedes "everyone will cry out was produced without any trickery on the part of the Devil." But he is not satisfied. "The Devil takes great delight in immersing himself in this (melancholic) humor. He first appeared to the girl in the form of the inquiring woman and planted the idea of the knife wound. He reappeared as the black dog to reinforce the belief in the incorporated knife. Her need to walk bent forward is evidence that the knife was not actually within her, because this position would have increased the trauma caused by the knife. The Devil blinded everyone including the surgeon while he obtained a discarded, properly corroded knife that he appeared to withdraw from the ulcer. Weyer prefers this "explanation" to the possibility that "the old scheming physician" had recognized and played along with the patient's delusion and by demonstrating a knife the apparent removal of which had cured her. "There is no reason for anyone to dispute that fact that the girl was possessed by a demon. Her many words and actions, such as refusing food and drink for several days should serve as proof" (312-18).

"When an ill surpassing the natural order manifests itself in an individual, recourse should be had . . . to a man renowned with respect to his profession, his learning and his experience, who will thoroughly distinguish diseases and their differences and signs and causes—that is to say, a learned and experienced physician—because such rare and severe symptoms often arise in diseases that stem from natural causes but are immediately attributed to witchcraft by men of no scientific experience and little faith. This often happens in the case of various convulsions, melancholia, epilepsy, etc." (446-47). He will refer the patient to a clergyman when he sees that the evil surpasses natural limits. The minister will then vigilantly inquire about the possessed or bewitched person's life and morals, his instruction in the Christian religion and in the chief tenets of our faith . . ."

“It is worth recalling that many things which come not from witchcraft but from hidden natural causes sometimes escape the physician” (447). Weyer is saying here that the more competent a physician is, the fewer are the clinical findings for which he is unable to give an organic humoral explanation, and consequently the fewer patients need to be referred for clerical care.

Weyer provides enough sufficiently detailed case reports for modern psychiatric diagnoses to be confidently inferred. The descriptions are extraordinary in that many were based on personal observation. Petrarch’s illustrative cases mostly are taken from Roman history or are anonymous. Pairing his descriptions with modern diagnostic categories is based on less specific evidence. However, Petrarch’s recognition of a wider range of emotional circumstances and their attribution to natural rather than supernatural forces tends to make him appear more modern than the herbal lore and demonology that relegates Weyer to his own time.

Most stark is the difference in attitude to impending death. According to Weyer, “Of all terrible things, death is the most terrible” (567). Actually he is saying that only madmen and fools kill themselves. While Petrarch advises fatalism: “Who is he, unless he were mad, that will complain that he is loosened from his fetters and discharged out of prison before his time. Truly he had more cause to rejoice if this happened sooner than his expectation, but certainly it happens not, nor can it happen so, for everything has its own time” (II:120).

The Old, but not the New Testament contains blunt statements about the attitude toward witches, such as “Thou shall not suffer a witch to live” (Exodus 22, 18), as well as Leviticus (20, 27), and Deuteronomy (18, 10).

The quandary over the centuries was what criteria were sufficient to identify such a person. Toward the end of *The Deception of Demons* Weyer states his main thesis most succinctly: “There is this natural reason why neither the frenzied nor the mad should be punished because of some transgression: they are tormented enough by their frenzy and punished enough by their misfortune. Therefore, just as an unhappy fate excuses them, it also excuses our witches, because they are destitute of a rational spirit and the power of reason and they cannot give the “consent” given by a sound mind or a well formed will” (572). Consequently, “In the same type of offense women sin less than men and should be punished less than men, all other things being equal. This is, of course, because of their weakness of spirit, mind, and natural disposition” (540). The argument favoring Petrarch’s relative psychological modernity is strengthened by his iconoclastic attitude in regard to three other staples of medieval thought: astrology and alchemy, both of which he deemed to be frauds, and the cure-all theriac, which he considered ineffective.

In the middle of a long letter to Boccaccio, dated 1363, he says:

You have heard what the astrologers dream: they extend the evil influence of the malignant stars into the sixty-fifth year of this century. After that, all the happier things are in doubt with which the charlatans are deluding those able to survive (the plague). Yet they keep promising, and the day is so near that it cannot long be doubtful how much the promise is worth—I mean among the people who hang upon the promises not just of astrologers but of any soothsayer or madman that comes along . . . They maintain that Mars and Saturn are coming together somewhere among the stars and that conjunction—to use their word—after the year's end will last for a full two years. Quite astonishing that from the beginning of things stars have never been in these locations as long as they have travelled their courses throughout the heavens! But if they were there, it is astonishing that from those same conjunctions and constellations have come such different effects . . . We do not know what is happening in the heavens, but impudently and rashly *they* profess to know¹¹² (Sen, III:1).

Chapter 111 in Book I of *Physic against Fortune* is devoted to a reasoned attack on alchemy and its practitioners. The art of alchemy “is the art of lying and deceiving . . . So sweet a thing it is to hope and be deceived.” The impossible hope of creating gold can not only impoverish you and drive you mad, but can physically result in blindness.

After “The Deception of Demons”

Two years after its publication, Weyer's first (1563) edition was translated into German “without my foreknowledge” at the recommendation of the Bishop of Basel.¹¹³ The sixth “book” was added in the second (1564) edition. Because of his dissatisfaction with the German translation, Weyer in 1567 published his own translation. The first French translation appeared in 1569. In 1570 Pope Pius V (1504–1572) cast *De Praestigiis Daemonum* into the Index of banned books, although in the second class, meaning that the author was not excommunicated. However, according to the 1582 Munich edition of the Index he locally was. Despite its citation in the Index,¹¹⁴ Latin editions were published in 1577 and 1583.

The first reference to Weyer is by Reginald Scot (1538–1599) in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, first published in 1584. This scholarly work had the same anti-demonologic purpose as Weyer's, who is referred to by name five times, once as “the most noble and famous physician.” He also is plagiarized repeatedly. It so

¹¹² Petrarca, *Old Age* (see note 17), 80–81.

¹¹³ Binz, *Doctor Weyer* (see note 6). On the editions of *De Praestigiis*, see 65–68.

¹¹⁴ Binz, *Doctor Weyer* (see note 6). On the Index of banned books, see 78–79.

happens that Scot also cites Petrarch by name, but *Physic against Fortune* only anonymously.¹¹⁵

The lack of Weyer's influence is shown by brief citations from two of the most erudite writers of the early seventeenth-century. Robert Burton commented in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1628): "Many deny witches at all, or, if there be any, they can do no harm. Of this opinion is Wierus (Weyer) . . . They laugh at all such stories; but on the contrary are most Lawyers, Divines, Physicians, Philosophers . . ." ¹¹⁶ Thomas Browne (1605–1684) in *Religio Medici* (1654) does not mention Weyer. "For my part, I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are Witches: they that doubt of these do not only deny them, but Spirits; and are obliquely and upon consequence a sort not only of Infidels, but Atheists,... the Devil has them already in a heresy as capital as Witchcraft." "Our endeavors are not only to combat with doubts, but always to dispute with the Devil: the villainy of the Spirit takes a hint of Infidelity from our Studies, and by demonstrating a naturality in one way, makes us mistrust a miracle in another."¹¹⁷

In regard to the description of psychiatric manifestations and their categorization, Felix Platter (1536–1614), the French-educated dean of the medical school of Basel, was more influential, based on his 1602 textbook of medicine, *Praxeos Medicae Tomi Tres*, in 1662 translated into English as *The Golden Practice of Physick*, and his 1614 supplementary case descriptions, *Observationum Libri Tres*.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, Platter did believe in demons.

Not until the nineteenth century do we find Weyer again cited: by Philip Pinel (1754–1826), another so called "founder of modern psychiatry."¹¹⁹ His *Treatise on Insanity* states:

The credit attached to the impostures of demoniacal possession in the writings of Wierus are not to be wondered at, when we consider that his works were published toward the middle of the seventeenth century (sic), and bear as much reference to theology as medicine. This author, whose errors admit of some palliation in consideration of the influence of popular prejudices, appears to have been a great adept in the mysteries of exorcism. He

¹¹⁵ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Introduction by Montague Summers (1930; New York: Dover Publications, 1972), Original 1584. Book III, chap. 11. Petrarch is cited in Book XIV, chap. 6.

¹¹⁶ Burton *Anatomy* (see note 80). Regarding witches, see 176.

¹¹⁷ *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, Three Volumes, ed. Charles Sayle (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1927), "Religio Medici," Vol. I, 31–32, 45.

¹¹⁸ Oskar Diethelm and Thomas F. Heffernan, "Felix Platter and Psychiatry," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Science* 1 (1965): 10–23.

¹¹⁹ Paul F. Craneheld, Preface to the 1962 edition of *A Treatise on Insanity* (see note 120), xxx–xxxiv.

records with great solicitude, the gifts of demoniacal prediction, the perfidious and malicious tricks of the devil under the human figure¹²⁰

In the preface to his second edition (1809) Pinel rather gives credit for psychiatric insight to Aretaeus, Celsus, Caelius Aurelianus and Alexander Trallianus.

Recently Jan Goldstein (Chicago) discovered the lectures on Weyer that were given in Paris in 1865 by Alexandre Axenfeld (d. 1876), a Russian born French doctor.

He apparently focused on Weyer as an iconoclast for free will in contrast to the current repressive intellectual environment in France. His lectures on the “morbid physiology of the nervous system” in 1865 seem not to have been considered “psychiatric.”¹²¹ This work was later cited by Lederer.¹²² Thus at this time Zilboorg remains the first to advocate Weyer’s historical importance for psychiatry.

According to Zilboorg, the historical significance of Weyer is in that he was the first medical man to insist that normal and pathological mental processes differ in degree and form, but not in substance, and that willpower has nothing to do with mental illness. In his 1941 *History of Medical Psychology* Zilboorg enlarged this interpretation.¹²³ Weyer may indeed be credited for having pioneered the writing of descriptions of psychopathological behavior based on personal observation. However, in view of the vague differences between orthodox medicine and quackery in his time, the fact that he was a physician is of lesser importance than Zilboorg credits. Weyer commendably emphasized disturbances of the imagination as the mechanism for mental aberrations. Had he not felt a need to elucidate his explanation with demonology, his founding status in psychiatry could be argued more persuasively. Petrarch never claimed to be a physician and did not literally invoke disturbances of the imagination as the mechanism for mental aberrations. However, he did recognize and consider a larger variety of mental states than Weyer did two centuries later. These included not only senescent mental regression and mental retardation but, in greatest detail, the psychology of marital relationships.

120 Philippe A. Pinel, *Traite Medico-Philosophique sur l'alienations Mentale ou la Manie*, trans. D. D. Davis as *A Treatise on Insanity*. Facsimile of the 1806 London edition (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1962), Quote on 237.

121 Jan Ellen Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 355–57.

122 David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beaco*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 316–19.

123 Gregory Zilboorg and George W. Henry, *A History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941). On Weyer, see 207–35.

The assessment by George Mora (1991), another New York psychiatrist, is more prudent than Zilboorg's: "Weyer's role as a pioneer of modern psychiatry is more difficult to assess than his place in the history of witchcraft."¹²⁴ One commits the historiographic sin of presentism by divorcing the manifestations of a disturbed imagination from Weyer's demonologic explanations of the causes of the disturbance.

¹²⁴ Mora, *De Praestigiis* (see note 61), LXXVII.

Appendix

1. Quotations from Petrarch are identified by their volume and chapter number, such as (I:69). Quotations from Weyer are identified by the page number, such as (570).

2. “Heaviness” (II:99) in the sixteenth-century was a common term for sadness, depression. It is used in this sense repeatedly in the King James Version of the Old Testament. For example: *Proverbs* 12:25. Heaviness in the heart of man makes it stoop; but a good word makes it glad. *Psalms* 119:28. My soul melts from heaviness . . .

3. Pliny the Elder: *Natural History* vol 8:199, Book XXIX “On Remedies,” 24–25, “There is an elaborate mixture called theriac, which is compounded of countless ingredients, although Nature has given as many remedies, any one of which would be enough by itself. Mithridatic antidote is composed of fifty-four ingredients, no two of them having the same weight, while of some is prescribed one sixtieth part of one denarius. Which of the gods, in the name of Truth, fixed these absurd proportions? No human brain could have been sharp enough. It is plainly a showy parade of the art, and a colossal boast of science. And not even the physicians know their facts.”

Celsus, who lived concurrently with Pliny, gives a 36 item all botanical “most famous antidote of Mithridates . . . chiefly necessary against poisons introduced into our bodies through bites or food or drink” (see note 18), Vol. II:57. Book V:23.

4. Celsus, *De Medicina*, Book I, 1. Coitus indeed is neither to be desired overmuch, nor overmuch to be feared; seldom used it braces the body, used frequently it relaxes. Since, however, nature and not number should be the standard of frequency, regard being had to the age and constitution, coitus can be recognized as harmless when followed by neither languor nor by pain (see note 18), Vol. I: 43–45. Book I:1.

5. Presentism is defined as the interpretation from a contemporary point of view of information that is historically or culturally remote.

6. The Carolina paragraph identified as no. 98 in *The Deception of Demons* is no. 109 according to Binz.

7. Citations from Cicero’s *De Officiis* (DO) and *Tusculan Disputations* (TD) are provided in the order they are cited in the text (Book, paragraph, page).

(DO II–6, 187) Who fails to comprehend the enormous, two-fold power of Fortune for weal and for woe? When we enjoy her favoring breeze we are wafted over to the wished-for haven; when she blows against us, we are dashed to destruction.⁴⁸

(DO I–39, 145) “Three principles: first, impulse shall obey reason; second, estimate the importance of the object that we wish to accomplish; third, observe moderation in all that is essential to dignity of a gentleman . . . The one of prime importance is to keep impulse subservient to reason.”⁵¹

(DO. II–5, 185) “Virtue in general may be said to consist almost wholly in three properties: the first is Wisdom, the ability to perceive what in any given instance is true and real, what its relations are, its consequences and its causes; the second is Temperance, the ability to restrain the passions and make the impulses obedient to reason; and the third is Justice, the skill to treat with consideration and wisdom those with whom we are associated.”⁵²

(TD III–16, 245) The virtue which I usually call self-control and occasionally also discretion; but it may be, the virtue could rightly be called “frugality . . .” “Frugality” embraces all the other virtues as well. Therefore I count “frugality” by itself as left to be the fourth virtue.⁵³

(TD III–4–5, 233–35) These same movements of an agitated soul are “disorders,” but not “diseases” in the ordinary way of speaking . . . Every agitation of the soul is unsoundness of the mind. . . The term “unsoundness” means sickness and disease of the mind that is a condition of unhealthiness and sickness of soul which they have termed “unsoundness.” . . In a disordered soul, as in a disordered body, soundness of health is impossible. . . And there was no less insight in their giving to a condition of the soul, marked by the illuminating influence of the mind, the name of “mindlessness” as well as aberration of the mind.⁵⁵

(TD IV–13–14, 359–61) “Health of the soul means a condition when its judgments and beliefs are in harmony, and such health of soul is virtue. . . There is this dissimilarity between soul and body, that the strong soul cannot be attacked by disease as bodies can. But physical aversions can occur without blame, while it is not so with aversions of the soul in which all diseases and disorders are the result of contempt of reason.”⁵⁸

(TD III–14, 241–43) “The brave man is also self-reliant . . . The self-reliant man, however, is assuredly not excessively fearful; for here is a difference between confidence and timidity. And yet the man who is accessible to distress is also accessible to fear. . . It is probable that the man who is susceptible of distress is also susceptible of fear, and indeed of dejection and depression of soul . . . The work of the soul is the right use of reason.”⁵⁹

(TD III–11–12, 237–39) “Those then who are described as beside themselves are so described because they are not under the control of mind to which the empire of the whole soul has been assigned by nature . . . Folly without soundness of mind is nevertheless capable of the performance of ordinary duties and the routine conduct of life . . . Although frenzy seems to be worse than unsoundness of mind, frenzy can come upon the wise man, unsoundness of mind cannot.”⁶²

(TD IV–7, 343) “*Distress* then is a newly formed belief of present evil, the subject of which thinks it right to feel depression and shrinking of soul; *delight* is a newly formed belief of present good, and the subject of it thinks it right to feel enraptured; *fear* is a belief of threatening evil which seems to the subject of it insupportable; *lust* is a belief of prospective good and the subject of this thinks it advantageous to possess it at once upon the spot . . . On them also depend the results of the disorders; and so it is that distress results in some sting as it were of pain, fear in a kind of withdrawal and flight of the soul, delight in extravagant gaiety, lust in unbridled longing.”⁶⁵

(TD II–13, 179–81) “Disgrace is worse than pain, pain is clearly of no account; . . . so long as you control yourself by keeping your eyes upon them (nobility and honor) assuredly pain will lead to virtue and grow fainter by a deliberate effort of will... I do not deny the reality of pain—why else should courage be wanted?—but I say that it is overcome by patience if only there is a measure of patience. . . . I do not deny the reality of pain—why else would courage be wanted?—but I say that it is overcome by patience if only there is a measure of patience.”⁶⁶

(DO I–30, 115) Suicide may be for one man a duty, for another (under the same circumstances) a crime.⁶⁷

(TD III–36, 271) But what is more vile or disgraceful than a womanish man?⁶⁸

(TD I–46, 131) Death is encountered with most equanimity when the failing life can find solace in the reputation it has won. No one has lived too short a life who has discharged the perfect work of perfect virtue.⁶⁹

(DO I–34, 125–27) The old, it seems, should have their physical labors reduced; their mental activities should be actually increased. They should endeavor by means of their counsel and practical wisdom to be of as much service as possible to their friends and the young, and above all to the state.⁶⁹

(TD III:6, 231) “There is an art to healing the soul—I mean philosophy, whose aid must be sought not, as in bodily diseases, outside ourselves, and we must use the utmost endeavor, with all our resources and strength, to have the power to be ourselves, our own physicians.”⁷⁰

(TD III–2–3, 229) “Where men are carried away by desire of gain, lust of pleasure, and where men’s souls are so disordered that they are not far off unsoundness of mind (the natural consequence for all who are without wisdom), is there no treatment which should be applied to them? Is it that ailments of the soul are less injurious than physical ailments, or is it that physical ailments admit of treatment while there is no means of curing souls? But diseases of the soul are both more dangerous and more numerous than those of the body . . . Diseases of the soul are both more dangerous and more numerous than those of the body.”⁷¹

(TD IV–12, 355) There is a difference between intoxication and habitual drunkenness, and it is one thing to be a gallant and another thing to be in love.⁸²

(DO I–30, 109) “. . . sensual pleasure is quite unworthy of the dignity of man and we ought to despise it . . . but if someone should be found who sets some value upon sensual gratification, he must keep it strictly within the limits of moderate indulgence . . . And if we will only bear in mind the superiority and dignity of our nature, we shall realize how wrong it is to abandon ourselves to excess and to live in luxury and voluptuousness, and how right it is to live in thrift, self-denial, simplicity and sobriety.”⁸⁵

(DO III–33, 399–401) “How can he commend self-control and yet posit pleasure as the supreme good? For self-control is the foe of the passions, and the passions are the handmaidens of pleasure . . . I maintain that any and all sensual pleasure is opposed to moral rectitude.”⁸⁶

TD IV–11, 353) “While there is theoretically a difference between the ailments I am dealing with, in practice they are combined and their origin is found in lust and delight. . . . Other diseases like thirst for fame, like love of women and all other diseases and sicknesses originate in similar fashion. . . . There are moreover certain subdivisions of sickness of the following kind: *avarice, ambition, love of women, stubbornness, love of good living, intoxication, daintiness* and anything similar.”⁸⁷

(DO II–10, 205) “Sensual pleasure, a most seductive mistress, turns the hearts of a greater part of humanity away from virtue”⁸⁹

(DO I–29, 103) “. . . all the appetites must be controlled and calmed and we must take infinite pains not to do anything from mere impulse or random, without due consideration or care. . . .”⁸⁸

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Mental Health in Bohemian Medical Writings of the 14th–16th Centuries

With Special Emphasis on Albich (Albicus) of Uničov

The court physician to the last Luxemburg kings, Albich (Albicus) of Uničov (Uniczow, Neustadt), died in the Hungarian Buda (Ofen) in 1425, just a few years after the outbreak of the Hussite Wars. He was, indeed, a person worth attention: having graduated in medicine from the Charles University in Prague (established in 1348) and law from the older and more famed university in Bologna, he later lectured at the first institution for almost thirty years; then he became a private physician to and intimate friend of the Bohemian King Wenceslas IV, and in 1414 he was appointed the Archbishop of Prague and Chancellor of Prague University. The 1419 death of Wenceslas steered him to devote the rest of his life to his brother-successor, Sigismund (1368–1437).¹ Albich, the university teacher and king's physician, was naturally a prolific author. His manuscripts include Latin works on pharmacology and plague prophylaxis, comments on texts by the traditional experts of authority, theoretical essays, records of his lectures, and, last but not least, his *regimina sanitatis*—the regimen or treatises on the healthy conduct of life. At least three of his texts in the latter genre are known: the *regimina* were addressed personally (*ad personam*) to Wenceslas IV (*Regimen ad Wenceslaum*), and those to his brother Sigismund (*Regimen ad Sigismundum*), and the later version of the first, revised to a generally conceived regimen known as the *Vetularius* and published in print as the *Tractatus de regimine hominis* in Leipzig in 1484.²

1 Milada Říhová, *Dvorní lékař posledních Lucemburků* (Prague: Karolinum, 1999), 23–24.

2 *Tractatus de regimine hominis compositus per magistrum et dominum dominum Albicum archiepiscopum Pragensem* (Leipzig: M. Brandt, 1484). Cf. Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 171–189; id., *Regimen sanitatis pro krále Václava*, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae—Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 35.1–2 (Prague: Carolinum, 1995), 13–28; id., *Der Unterricht an der Prager Medizinischen Fakultät im Mittelalter*. Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen, 17 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), 163–73; id., *Regimen sanitatis jako pramen k poznání každodennosti dvou Lucemburků (Václav IV. a Zikmund v naučeních Mistra Albíka)*, *Medievalia Historica Bohemica*, 5 (Prague: Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, 1998), 91–102.

In order to understand the significance of mental health in medieval physiology and medicine, there were basically two methodologies of supreme importance: either to explore the descriptions of diseases in the therapy-oriented writings, or to study the role mental health played in the medieval teachings on, in today's terms, healthy lifestyle. The present essay will, with only few exceptions, focus on the texts reflecting on the subject of medieval dietetics. Albich summed up his dietetic rules as follows: "There are six things which are not innate to a human being but largely affect one's health or malady—one, the air that we breathe; two, food and drinks, and the rest that enters our body; three, exercise and rest; four, sleep and wakefulness; five, evacuation and repletion; six, our mental occurrences, such as joy, sadness, hope, fear, pain, and so on."³ This clearly embraces the six areas corresponding to the so-called "six things non-natural to humans" (*sex res non naturales*). Albich's recommendations thus lean on traditional medicine the origins of which can be traced as far back as classical antiquity.

The earliest Greek writings discussing the critical points of good regimen date to the fifth century B.C.E. and mainly revolve around the issues of eating and drinking and, to a lesser extent, also to other expressions and factors of human existence. The documents from the next centuries then reveal more rules of the ancient teachings how to retain vitality: diseases in general are viewed as caused by poor habits, and particular diseases as originating from individual behavior. Physical condition, then, is perceived as a necessary precondition of retaining good mental health. Aristotle's expression "means" (*mesotes*) inspired the classical physicians to lay down the basic postulate of living in health: adhering to moderation and harmony in one's physical activities. Galen of Pergamon (129–ca. 200/ca. 216) defined this harmony as the elementary prerequisite of individual health, and distinguished four types of body constitutions according to their prevailing characteristics (hot, cold, dry, moist): each type, in Galen's interpretation, requires a different approach and different rules for retaining health. In his theory, Galen opines that a perfectly healthy body is merely an ideal condition, and real bodies are in a principally neutral (*neutrum*) shape. They can remain healthy but can also succumb to an illness. The negative progress is unavoidable if a person does not observe the basic rules of hygiene, i.e., is not moderate in his or her life expressions, such as sleep and wakefulness, motion and rest, hunger

3 "Sex sunt res non naturales, que valde operantur ad sanitatem vel egritudinem, scilicet: aer nos circumdans, secunda res est cibus et potus et aliaque corpus ingrediuntur, tertia motus et quies, quarta sompnus et vigilia, quinta evacuatio et retencia, sexta accidentia anime ut sunt gaudium et tristitia, spes, timor, dolor etc." Quoted from Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 145.

and thirst, filling and emptying of the body, bathing and emotions. These areas, along with atmosphere (air) and environment in general, later became the foundation of medieval dietetics.⁴

The medieval system of dietetic rules developed during the era called, with some exaggeration, the “Twelfth-Century Renaissance.”⁵ The period between approximately the eleventh and thirteenth centuries brought Latin translations of fundamental Greek and Arabic works of philosophy, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, and also medicine to Europe.⁶ The main hubs of the translating activities mentioned in connection with medicine were mainly the south of the Apennine Peninsula centered in Salerno and the Iberian Peninsula centered in Toledo. These were multicultural regions of intense commercial as well as intellectual traffic. Salerno and the nearby Monte Cassino monastery hosted Constantinus Africanus (1017–1087) who translated one of the primary textbooks of medieval medicine, *Pantegni (Tegni)*, and a brief introduction to the work, *Isagoge ad Tegni Galieni*, from Arabic. In the following centuries, the two treatises gained fame as parts of the compendium of medical papers, known as the *Articella*. The introduction (*Isagoge*) to Galen’s vade-mecum to practical medicine contains the legendary sentence claiming that medicine is divided into two parts—practical and theoretical (*medicina dividitur in duas partes, id est theoreticam et practicam*)⁷—with theory covering three spheres of human knowledge: natural things

4 Pedro Gil Sotres, “The Regimens of Health,” *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 291–94. See also Timo Joutsivuo, *Scholastic Tradition and Humanist Innovation—the Concept of Neutrum in Renaissance Medicine* (Helsinki: Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, 1999); Luis Garcia-Ballester, “On the Origins of the Six Non-Natural Things,” *Galen, Galen und das hellenistischen Erbe: Verhandlungen des IV. Internationalen Galen-Symposiums. 18.–20. Septembers 1989, in Berlin*, ed. Jutta Kollesh and Diethard Nickel. Sudhoffs Archiv, Beihefte 32 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), 105–15.

5 Jacques Le Goff, “What Did the Twelfth-Century Renaissance Mean,” *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Lineham and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), 635–47; see also R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999); R. C. Dales, *The Intellectual Life of Western Europe in the Middle Ages*. Brill Paperbacks (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1992), 186–209; Stephen C. Ferruolo, “The Twelfth-Century Renaissance,” *Renaissance Before the Renaissance*, ed. Warren Treadgold (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 114–43; *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert Louis Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); to some extent, Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1927), as the seminal study on this topic, still carries significant importance until today.

6 J. A. Weisheipl, *Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought*. Mediaeval Studies, 27 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1965), 54–90.

7 *Articella* (Venice: Petrus Bergomensis de Quarengiis, 1507), A₂r.

(*res naturales*), non-natural things (*res non naturales*), and things contradicting nature (*res contra naturam*). And exactly the six things non-natural to humans (*res non naturales*), i.e., air, food and drinks, motion and rest, sleep and wakefulness, metabolism and emotions,⁸ represented the above-mentioned skeleton of dietetic rules of the Prague physician Albich of Uničov.

It should be noted, however, that this skeleton was far from covering the entire scholastic thinking as to the causes of diseases or, respectively, the appropriate dietetics. For example, the famous Avicenna's *Canon medicinae*, translated in the thirteenth century by Gerard of Cremona, did not follow such a simply conceived division into six subject areas. Avicenna (980–1037) departed from Aristotle's four general causes—efficient, material, formal and final—and also distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic causes. He, too, nonetheless, ranked, along with other things, air, food and drinks, exercise and rest, sleep and wakefulness, repletion and evacuation, and the very emotions among the extrinsic causes (or, more precisely, efficient causes).⁹ It was also as a result of Avicenna's theses that mental affection (*affectus animi*) retained its paradoxical role of non-natural and simultaneously external factor of changes in physical health in the medieval regimen teachings.

The canon Hugo of St. Victor (ca. 1096–1141), in his summary of the contemporary knowledge, entitled *Didascalicon* (*Eruditio didascalica*), states that medicine is divided into two parts: occasions (*occasiones*) and operations (*operationes*). The second part of the passage lists various therapeutic interventions, from applying pills, emetics and enemas to cauterizing wounds, and straightening bones. In the first part, this Parisian scholar informs readers that occasions are related to six subjects: air, motion and quiet, emptiness and satiety, food and drink, sleep and wakefulness, and the reactions of soul. He further writes: "These are called 'occasiones' because, when tempered, they occasion and preserve health, or, when non-tempered, ill health."¹⁰ The canon thus reduced the theo-

⁸ Ibid., f. A₄r–v; cf. *Medieval Medicine—A Reader*, ed. Faith Wallis. Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures, 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 144–46.

⁹ Karine van't Land, "Internal, yet Extrinsic: Conceptions of Bodily Space and Their Relation to Causality in Late Medieval University Medicine," *Medicine and Space. Body, Surroundings and Borders in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Patricia A. Baker, Han Nijdam, and Karine van't Land. Visualizing the Middle Ages, 4 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 85–115; here 92.

¹⁰ *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 78. Cf. the Latin text: "Medicina dividitur in duas partes, occasiones et operationes. Occasiones sex sunt: aer, motus et quies, inanitio et repletio; cibus et potus; somnus et vigiliae; accidentia animae. Quae ideo dicuntur esse occasiones, quia faciunt et conservant sanitatem, si temperata fuerint, si intemperata infirmitatem. Accidentia

retical component of medicine to the issue of the six non-natural things, which is, to a certain extent, understandable. Medieval medicine was not too successful in treating diseases but it was, on the other hand, well-comprehensible and trustworthy in its recommendations concerning prevention. This was also reflected in the dietetic writings called the regimen of health (*regimina sanitatis*), while the golden age of their origination coincides with the climax of scholastic medicine. We might also accept that many of the basic health regimens sound very reasonable even to us today, especially in terms of alternative, or holistic, medicine.

The classification of scientific arts as outlined by Hugo of St. Victor associates medicine with mechanical fields (*artes mechanicae*) and rates physicians as craftsmen. A century later, however, medicine already formed part of the scientifically-based disciplines of university education. The essence and maybe even the cause of this historical shift forward can be exemplified by the conclusions of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Although Aquinas's physician is still labeled a "craftsman producing health" (*artifex factivus sanitatis*), his profession is not limited to mere fabricating and using medications, but also, and importantly, includes thorough pondering of the causes of health and disease.

An ideal physician in Aquinas's view thus begins his studies by exploring natural philosophy and attempts to translate its general postulates into practice when professing his craft.¹¹ Medicine hence turns into applied philosophy and

animae ideo dicuntur occasio sanitatis vel infirmitatis, quia aliquando vel commovent calorem impetuose ut ira, vel leniter ut delectationes, vel attrahunt et celant; idque aut impetuose ut terror et timor, aut leniter ut angustia. Et sunt quae commovent naturalem virtutem intus et extra, ut est tristitia. Omnis operatio medicinae, aut intus fit, aut extra. Intus ut ea quae ore, naribus, auribus sive ano intromittuntur, ut potiones, vomitiones, pulveres, clystera, etc. quae bibendo, vel masticando, vel attrahendo sumuntur. Foris ut epidimata, cataplasmata, emplastra. Chirurgia, quae duplex est in carne, ut incidere, suere, urere. In osse, ut solidare, et juncturae reddere. Nec moveat quampiam, quod cibum et potum inter attributa medicinae annúmero, quae superius venationi attribui, quia secundum diversos respectus hoc factum est. Vinum quoque in botro agriculturae est; in penu, cellarii; in gustu, medici. Similiter ciborum apparatus ad pistrinum, macellum, coquinam pertinet; virtus saporis ad medicinam." Hugo de S. Victore, *Eruditio didascalica*, ed. J.-P. Migne. Patrologia Latina 176, 762.

11 "Ad naturalem philosophum pertinet invenire prima et universalia principia sanitatis et infirmitatis; particularia autem principia considerare pertinet ad medicum, qui est artifex factivus sanitatis (. . .) medici non solum experimenti sutentes sed causas sanitatis et egritudinis inquirentes (. . .) et hec est ratio quare medici bene artem prosequentes a naturalibus incipiunt." Quoted from Luis Garcia-Ballester, "Artifex factivus sanitatis: Health and Medical Care in Medieval Latin Galenism," *Galen and Gallenism: Theory and Medical Practice from Antiquity to the European Renaissance*, ed. Luis Garcia-Ballester, Jon Arrizabalaga, Montserrat Cabre, Lluís Cifuentes, and Fernando Salmon. Variorum Collected Studies Series, 710 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 127–28.

returns to its classical roots. The given shift is thus clearly demonstrated in the genre of regimes of health due to the emphasis laid on the causes and the overall ideal of health.

Medieval texts within the genre of *regimina sanitatis* do not follow any fixed form. Either versed or prosed, they were presented as poems, treatises, dialogues, and even correspondence. Their extent varied, ranging from brief overviews to comprehensive volumes. Medieval sources document that students at the schools and faculties of medicine were trained in the skill of their writing, and we can thus rightfully perceive some transcriptions in medical codices as educational or, respectively, didactic tools. *Regimina sanitatis* can be further divided into personal and general according to their addressee. The first ones were aimed at a particular person—either a ruler or someone enjoying some other position of power—and their author usually was his or her private physician. These reflect the ailments of the recipients, focusing on their specific problems and providing advice pertaining to their social status. Historians value them as immensely rich sources for exploring the habits and also diseases of significant personalities.

The texts of the second type lack these interesting and often intimate details and instead anonymously remind the reader of the healthy regimen rules. These general *regimina sanitatis* further include tracts focusing on a specific age—being, for example, devoted to the regimen of children or seniors, etc.—and eventually tracts divided according to the individual seasons or even months of year.¹² There are also therapy-oriented *regimina sanitatis* and texts discussing concrete illnesses. The latter type is documented in the late medieval period by numerous texts on plague. Probably the most well-known *regimen sanitatis* is the so-called *Schola salernitana* or the *Salerno regimen*, also called the *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum*. The original poem, dating to the first half of the 13th century at the latest, ran to nearly 370 verses,¹³ while its later versions are more extensive due to a host of addenda. Over the centuries, the Salerno regimen rules were translated into many languages.¹⁴

The earliest known dietetic treatise with relation to the Kingdom of Bohemia is the *Book on Regimen* from 1360 (*Liber de regimine sanitatis directus Karolo imperatori anno domini 1360*), devoted to Emperor Charles IV (1316–1378). Its

12 Ortrun Riha, *Meister Alexanders Monatsregeln: Untersuchungen zu einem spätmittelalterlichen regimen duodecim mensium mit kritischen Textausgabe*. Würzburger medizinhistorische Untersuchungen, 30 (Pattensen/Hanover: Horst Wellm Verlag, 1985), 18–25.

13 Haskins, *The Renaissance* (see note 5), 323.

14 Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 107–08.

author is the clergyman and private imperial physician Rembotus Eberhardi de Castro (died probably around 1390).¹⁵ In the text, Rembotus observes that sensual and animal desires, such as solicitude and sadness (*appetitum animale et sensitivum, ut sollicitudinem et tristicam*) clearly influence the healthy condition of a human body. In his view, an ideal body is mainly symmetrical as to the proportion of bodily juices as well as the size and arrangement of limbs. Such a body must, in its character and beauty, hold onto moderation—for example, it should be neither totally hairless nor totally hairy. As for mental characteristics, it should be neither prone to anger nor wholly phlegmatic, emotionally apathetic or, eventually, oversensitive (*non irascibilis et non sine ira . . . et non obtusus sensibus neque dolorosus*). Mental affections of such a body should be moderate (*medium in passionibus*).

Although Rembotus explicitly only discusses the characteristics of an ideal body (*corpus*), he eventually also comes to deal with the soul, describing it as a mirror of the physical condition (*anima sequitur naturam corporis*). Mental affections in his interpretation are not only the factor responsible for retaining physical health but also are its projection. Healthy people express moderate emotions, while intense physical emotions are detrimental to health.¹⁶ Crucial for retaining good health are proper habits, with unimpeachable mental behavior (*mores animi sine querela*). Those who are quick-tempered, choleric, self-pitying or, on the contrary, oversensitive, rank among the group of individuals whose health is most at risk. Their proportion of juices in the parts of brain where the above-mentioned mental processes occur is necessarily wrong. Mental affections can moreover be negatively affected by bad eating habits, inappropriate or obscene physical motion, and even looking at ugly things or listening to bad music.¹⁷

Rembotus claims that inadequate emotions can damage the brain, i.e. the organ traditionally linked with mental abilities and, simultaneously, mental disorders. Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) in his celebrated encyclopedia (*Etymologiae*) listed five disorders concerning the human mind: frenzy (*frenensis*), hydrophobia (*aquaementus*), epilepsy (*epilemsia*), mania (*mania*), and melancholy (*melancholia*), also specifying the affected part of the mind in the case of the latter three. Epilepsy is thus related to fantasy, melancholy to reason, and frenzy to memory

¹⁵ Milada Říhová, Dana Stehlíková and David Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře Karla IV. a Jana Lucemburského* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2010), 115.

¹⁶ Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 128.

¹⁷ Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 129–31.

(*epilepsia autem in phantasia fit, melancholia in ratione, mania in memoria*).¹⁸ The given parts correspond to the three mental abilities and at the same time to the three cerebral chambers as they are described in the Latin *Cosmographia (De mundi universitate)* by Bernardus Silvestris. This work, dating to the end of the first half of the twelfth century, is a philosophical allegory, and it deals with the creation of the universe and man. According to Bernardus's conviction, the soul resides in the brain. He divides the cerebrum into three chambers, corresponding to the elementary functions of the soul: the anterior chamber serves the imagination (*phantasia*), the posterior one serves the memory (*memoria*), and the center hosts reason (*ratio*).¹⁹

Rembotus, nonetheless, saw a more general danger for physical health in mental affections: inadequate emotions can negatively affect our bodily temperature as the essential physiological factor of life. Immoderate mental experiences in his view make a body more choleric which can result into fevers and other, similar illnesses. Emotional apathy, on the other hand, lowers temperature which subsequently leads to weakness and diseases. He concludes that retaining one's physical and mental health (*pro sanitate corporis et anime*) clearly requires looking after the body temperature closely via, among other things, controlling inappropriate affections.²⁰

Yet another personality alerting the readers/listeners against the detrimental effects of inadequate emotions on the health of the human body was Havel (Gallus) of Strahov (died probably after 1399), an astronomer, physician, and author of the regimen also dedicated to Emperor Charles IV (*Regimen Magistri Galli de Strahow ad Karolum*). He referred to the introductory verses from the Salerno regimen (*Schola salernitana*), telling the readers that their health first and foremost depends on nurturing their mental affections and, mainly, on controlling anger.²¹ Elsewhere, he recommends the emperor to avoid anger, sadness, and anxiety (*ira, tristitia et mens angustiosa*).²²

18 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae IV*, ed. Klára Hušková and Hana Floriánová (Prague: Oikoy-menih, 2003), 72; see also William D. Shape, *Isidore of Seville: The Medical Writings. An English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*. Transactions of the Americal Philosophical Society, New Series, 54.2 (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1964), 58.

19 *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris*, ed. Winthrop Wetherbee (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 122. See also Brian Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvestris* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 212.

20 Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 130.

21 Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 186.

22 Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 188.

In addition, Havel instructs Charles IV to wear precious and scented clothes (*vestes sint preciose et odorifere*).²³ This, too, could be related to controlling mental affections as a factor of retaining physical health. Let us recall here Rembotus claiming that an individual's mood can be negatively affected by looking at ugly things. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the physician Johannus Berka of Choceň in his Czech-written *Books on the Causes of Plague* (*Kniežky o morních příčinách*) opined that those who own expensive and precious clothes should wear them during the plague epidemic, for they evoke pleasure and support one's good temper.²⁴ Havel of Strahov also wrote a brief letter on protection against plague contagion (*Missum imperatori*), equally addressed to Charles IV, advising him not to lose heart even if he feels symptoms of the disease. He should remain optimistic, jolly, even salacious, and definitely should not succumb to deep sadness over the news about the horrors caused by the plague (*Quando corpus vestam sentitis gravum, sitis jocundi, affabilis, mitis et solaciosus et nunquam graviter tristare debetis. Et si dicitur vobis de pestilentia, teneatis pro dictis*).²⁵

The role of nice apparel in this context seems to be clear: it allows the mind to focus on the positive and thus not yield to the sense of imminent death.²⁶ The *regimina sanitatis* aiming at protection against the plague mention the desirability of the mind being distracted quite regularly. The physician Johannus Černý (ca. 1456 – 1530) in his book on plague, *Treatise on the Plague Diseases* (*Spis o nemocech morních*), counsels the readers to be optimistic and enjoy happy moments with their friends during the times of the threat of the plague. The appropriate activities supporting such a distraction are playing chess, cards or dice, listening to music, and moderate wine drinking.²⁷ Another author in connection with the somber feelings as to the approach of death reminds us that good cheer is a fine life preserver and likewise warns against ponderings over the end of human life.²⁸

23 Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 180.

24 Johann Berka of Choceň, *Kniežky o morových příčinách* (Litomyšl: Pavel Olivetský of Olivet, 1531), G₁r.

25 *Pestschriften aus den ersten 150 Jahren nach der Epidemie des "schwarzen Todes" 1348*, ed. Karl Sudhoff. Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin, 4 (Leipzig: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1911), 197–98. See also Pavel Spunar, *Repertorium auctorum provecum idearum post Universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans*. Vol. 1 (Warsaw: Institutum Ossolinianum, 1985), 221.

26 Martin Nodl, *Lékař a mor aneb intelektuál rezignující a bojující*, Listy filologické, 124 (Prague: Akademie věd, 2001), 164.

27 Jan Černý, *Spis o nemocech morních* (Prague: Jan of Choceň, 1542), D₃r.

28 Jan Vočehovský, *Krátkej spis o morové nemoci* (Prostějov: Jan Günther, 1552), D₂r.

An extensive, Czech-written treatise on the regimes of health was published in 1536 by the physician Johann Kopp of Raumenthal. His *Basic and Perfect Regimen of Health* (*Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví*) provides general ideas about the effects of the six non-natural things on human health, as well as recommendations aimed at various temperaments and instructions on appropriate behavior during the particular seasons of the year. The author, in the spirit of medieval tradition, observes that mental affections rather fundamentally influence physical health, and states that not only negative emotions such as anger and grief but even joy, if very intense, can eventually be mortal.²⁹ He therefore recommends restraint in experiencing emotions³⁰ and, mainly, taking an individual's temperament into account. Phlegmatic natures thus benefit from abrupt changes of mood and their health prospers anytime they become agitated, angry, or worried. Melancholic persons should mainly seek enjoyment and avoid negative emotions, while those of choleric predisposition should especially eschew anger, and sanguine types are doing well if their mind is preoccupied by worries.³¹ Concerning the four seasons, Kopp's points can be summarized as follows: intense experiences are not recommended in Spring and Summer but are, on the contrary, beneficial to our health in Autumn and Winter.³²

The four seasons in pre-modern European thinking traditionally correspond to the four cardinal points, four bodily juices and the four ages of man. The year, the world, and the individual in this system of thinking are interlinked by both quality and quantity analogies.³³ Albich of Uničov expressed this relation between micro- and macrocosms in verses, equaling the particular seasons to his own life experiences. This is what he wrote about Autumn and Winter: "The

29 Johann Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (Prague: Jan Had, 1536), 30r. See also Bo J. Theutenberg, *Doktor Johannes Copp von Raumenthal* (Skara: Skara stiftshistoriska sällsk, 2013), 27–30. See also David Tomíček, "The Concept of Good Life According to the King's Physician Johann Kopp von Raumenthal," *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien*, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 309–16.

30 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 46r.

31 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 47v–50v.

32 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 40v–62r.

33 David Tomíček, *On the Subject of Microcosm in Czech Medical Literature of the 16th Century*. *Anthropologie* 48.2 (Brno: Moravské zemské museum, 2010), 185–88. See also Heinrich Schipperges, *Der Garten der Gesundheit—Medizin in Mittelalter* (Mannheim: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1987), 295; Rudolf Allers, *Microcosmus: From Anaximandros to Paracelsus*. *Traditio. Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion*, 2 (New York: Fordham University, 1944), 319–407.

second two seasons of year are called Autumn and Winter. These are worse and more unpleasant than the first two, and are transient. Similarly, the second two ages of man, i.e., old age and decrepitude, are very sad since people are troubled by many, and even serious, worries and are turning grey and ill and are not flourishing any longer; instead, their powers are failing them” (*Alia duo tempora anni vocantur autumnus et yems. Ista duo tempora sunt peyora et deteriora ac transitoria. Sic alie due etates, videlicet senectus et senilis, sunt etates multum tristes et /homines/ irati cum cum multis et magnis curis incipiunt canescere, infirmari, non flore/re/, sed deficere*).³⁴ Albich in his versed text further claims that humans in old age not only suffer from hair loss but also loss of natural body temperature, and both men and women are thus less joyful (*tam in viris quam mulieribus nulla leticia, quia leticia venit a calore*).³⁵ The author in this context notes that he, too, already counts among the old, his body has turned cold, and he therefore yields to sadness (*sed tristicia venit Albico ex frigiditate, quia Albicus iam de frigidis*).³⁶ Johann Kopp advised old people to avoid sadness and all worries and to be of good cheer, if possible, because joy and good cheer represent the foundation and at the same time the protection of a healthy life.³⁷

Kopp does not fail to incorporate the subject of mental occurrences into his descriptions of the individual parts of human body. He tends to view the brain as an organ especially strained by mental activities, including emotions. But the heart in relation to them is, however, more significant and superior, being “the king of his kingdom,” while the brain is merely one of its caretakers or, “hetmans,” as the author literally put it. This is why we should pay particular attention to the heart, and those who crave good physical condition should keep their hearts healthy and strong and behave accordingly.

The heart, as Kopp further deduces, benefits from a pleasant environment part of which should be lush meadows, soothing forests, gurgling streams and lovely gardens. It can also thrive from looking at all that is appealing and charming: works of art, jewels and gems, gold, rings, adorned tableware, tidy rooms, beautiful clothes, and those kinds of things. Some beverages, too, can bring pleasure to one’s heart, among them especially good white wine, for wine brightens us up.³⁸ Johann Kopp adds that there is no more serious enemy of the heart than worries,

³⁴ Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 35.

³⁵ Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 35.

³⁶ Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 35.

³⁷ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 60r.

³⁸ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 67v–68r.

distress, and grief, and no better friend than joy and delight.³⁹ An anonymous Czech-written commentary on the versed *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum*, published in print in 1584, reads that good cheer supports natural body heat, perfects spirits and other life expressions, preserves youth, improves rational judgment, and makes one more prolific and fit for work.⁴⁰

Medieval dietetic rules in general pay much attention to wine and, symptomatically, invite its responsible consumption. This is perhaps why Albich's versed response to Avicenna's and Seneca's statements promoting the benefits of drinking is so ironic. His lines "advise" to start drinking in the early morning and to continue throughout the day, not giving up until late at night. With due consequences, naturally: "Avicenna: Melius est repleti potu quam cibo. De ista auctoritate gaudiunt bibuli et allegant Seneca dicente: Serotina ebrietas matutinali potacione curatur. Secundum tales stultos ponuntur hii versus: Ut vivas sane a potibus incipe mane. Ut vivas sanus sit plenus meridianus. Vespere sic bibas quod quod numquam sobrius ibis."⁴¹ The ironic tone is underlined by the fact that pathological drunkenness had traditionally been ranked among the diseases harming brain activity, as was also plainly put by Bernardus Gordonius (died 1318), a teacher at the faculty of medicine at the Montpellier University, in his most famed treatise *Lillium medicinae*.⁴² Rembotus Eberhardi de Castro writes that wine drinking can cause lunacy and dullness.⁴³ Also Johann Kopp of Raumenthal warns his readers that excessive wine involvement can result in changes in personality: apart from irate behavior, in stupefied sensual competence, and, ultimately, madness and death.⁴⁴ The anonymous commentary to the Salernitan *Regimen sanitatis* follows up in the same spirit, mainly stressing the related negative digesting processes. As a consequence of digesting wine as well as other beverages, the stomach produces poisonous vapors which consequently rise up to the brain. If they extremely chill it, they can cause either epilepsy or stroke; if they extremely heat the brain, the result is insanity.⁴⁵

An author quite eloquent as to how one should avoid the negative effects of irresponsible drinking is the physician Adam Huber of Riesenpach (died 1613)

³⁹ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 68v.

⁴⁰ *O zachování dobrého zdraví, knížka školy salernitánské* (Olomouc: Fridrich Milichtaler, 1584), A₇r.

⁴¹ Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 145.

⁴² *Bernardi Gordonii Opus, Lillium medicinae inscriptum* (Lyon: Apud Gulielmum Rouillium, 1559), 213–15.

⁴³ Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 130.

⁴⁴ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 29r.

⁴⁵ *O zachování dobrého zdraví* (see note 39), L₃v.

who composed his treatise on a healthy regimen in 1587. Huber's advice includes carrying a ring inlaid with a large amethyst which hampers the harmful vapors rising up and endangering the brain, although he, too, perceives excessive drinking as nothing but volunteering for madness.⁴⁶

The regimen treatises regularly pinpoint anger as the most harmful emotion. As stated above, Albich of Uničov often warned the Bohemian King Wenceslas about its negative effects. He kept urging that any attack of anger, i.e., according to Aristotle, an abrupt rush of blood to the heart—causes paralysis and headache, dramatically reduces mental capabilities, and, as a final effect, leads to “insanity” (*Sola ira facit paralysim et dolorem capitis, ut dicit Aristoteles: Ira est accessio sanguinis iuxta cor . . . Ira impedit animum, ne possit cernere verum . . . sola ira facit hominem fatuum*).⁴⁷ Johann Kopp of Raumenthal departed from the same advice when enumerating the negative effects of anger. His detailed description lists anger as the main factor increasing the level of yellow bile in the body which provides fertile ground for yellow fever and other febrile diseases.⁴⁸ The author of the anonymous Czech-written commentary to the *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum*, then repeats the already traditionally known risks ensuing from anger attacks, and he in no way differs in describing the physiological essence of the given emotional condition. The text accordingly views paralysis, insanity and/or abrupt death as direct consequences of anger.⁴⁹ Adam Huber of Riesenpach moreover avers that anger-infused bodies often appear more reddish and are increasingly prone to committing evil acts.⁵⁰ The latter probably means that offences such as homicides and other unlawful killings are committed due to a sudden loss of control.

Yet another condition detrimental to our health from the point of view of classical scholars is lovesickness. Bernardus Gordonius in his *Lilium medicinae* clearly ranks it among mental diseases, discussing the issue in more detail in the chapter entitled “De amore qui hereos dicitur.”⁵¹ The *regimina sanitatis* in general warn about the given illness as well. Rembotus Eberhardi views it as one of the mental conditions which can not only distinctively transfigure our bodies but can

⁴⁶ *Regiment zdraví*, ed. Pavel Kucharský (Prague: Avicenum, 1980), 157.

⁴⁷ Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 110.

⁴⁸ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 29v.

⁴⁹ *O zachování dobrého zdraví* (see note 39), A₃v–A₄r.

⁵⁰ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 45), 107.

⁵¹ Bernardi Gordonii *Opus* (see note 41), 210–13. See also Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

also cause them severe harm.⁵² Albich of Uničov defines this “heroic love” physiologically, as caused by an increased secretion of black bile resulting from falling in love with a particular woman. He describes it as a dry disease, occurring in the front and middle part of the head and mainly affecting the spheres responsible for judgment and imagination (*Amor hereos est sollicitudo melancholica propter amorem mulieris. Est passio anterioris et medie partis capitis sicca, quare est nocumentum principaliter discretive et per colligantiam ymaginative*).⁵³ Albich’s treatments for this are regular baths and travels and, especially, frequent intercourse with other females (*cum alia coeat fortiter*).⁵⁴

A quite surprising aspect of medieval medicine, abounding in (seeming) paradoxes, is the advice related to alcohol intake. For example, Albich encourages patients to get intoxicated, albeit only from time to time, in order to replenish the liquids in their otherwise dehydrated brains, moreover suggesting that slight inebriation invites sexual exuberance while intense drunkenness helps with forgetting as it induces sleep (*Inebrietur quibusdam diebus, ut cerebrum humectetur, quia sicut modica inebriacio incitat ad luxuriam, ita magnopere obfuscatur, quia dormire facit*).⁵⁵ This seems to suggest that the medieval physician sees a positive effect, and therefore also some sense, in contravening the widely accepted limits of one’s life conduct. And then there is also Johann Kopp of Raumenthal who recommends healing the “rabid sickness,” as he nicknames lovesickness (*amor hereos*), via frequent sex. He thinks that it invigorates, soothes the mind and relieves anger and grief and, in addition, is good for the heart, chasing the excessive black bile out of the body, boosting the appetite and, in addition, acting as an anti-insomnia agent.⁵⁶

Black bile occupied a special position in medieval medicine, being viewed as a source of negative qualities and even a specific ailment. Bernardus Gordonius, for example, discerns a single mental disease whose name corresponds to one of the bodily humors: melancholy (*melancholia*).⁵⁷ The *Regimen salernitatis salernitanum* states that high levels of black bile make people sad, infirm, and the least eloquent (*tristes, parvos, perpauca loquentes*). These types then devour themselves in vigilant studies, sleep little, are stubborn in their intentions, and hardly ever blame themselves for anything (*vigilat studio, nec mens est dedicata somno/*

52 Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 14), 130.

53 Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 166.

54 Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 166.

55 Říhová, *Dvorní lékař* (see note 1), 166.

56 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 31r–31v.

57 Bernardi Gordonii *Opus* (see note 41), 202–10.

servant propositum, sibi nil reputant). Other verses then unveil a melancholic as a person who is envious, sad, desirous, stingy, insincere, and timid (*invidus et tristis, cupidus, destrae que tenacis / non expers fraudis, timidus*).⁵⁸ The author of the Czech-written comments basically abides by the Latin original. He stresses, however, that people of this nature suffer from nightmares, seek solitude, fear darkness, tend to feel anger, and often commit suicide.⁵⁹

Kopp of Raumenthal also describes the most symptomatic dreams of the melancholic nature. In his view, their main subjects are as follows: digging in soil (especially digging graves), death and dying, darkness, imprisonment, being executioners and their aides, thefts and robberies, all kinds of saddening things, and monks and nuns.⁶⁰ Kopp's characteristic of the people of the given disposition is also interesting: they supposedly enjoy all possible encounters with soil, and therefore often pursue plowing, as usually done by peasants, or digging graves. They are also inclined to the professions of latrine cleaners or dog catchers. In general, they do not view any stinky craft as repugnant, often being cheaters and killers, and can end up as treacherous and false. They have intense sexual desires but do not seek beautiful women; instead, the objects of their physical attraction are animals. They despise everything that others like, and enjoy everything that repulses others. They are gloomy, unfaithful, envious, mocking, vengeful, villainous, taciturn, and solitary. People shun them.⁶¹ Kopp recommended to them a remedy in the form of avoiding negative emotions (sadness, worries, envy, and hate) and, on the contrary, focusing on the positive ones (gaiety, joy).⁶²

The natural psychosomatic disposition of being prone to a sickness demonstrating the signs of modern depression was thus, in the framework of the above-mentioned texts of the *regimina sanitatis* genre, transformed into a description of a pathologically deformed personality. Generally speaking, the subject of melancholy resonated quite intensely and in various forms with sixteenth-century thinking, as it is, for example, apparent from the engraving of the same title by Albrecht Dürer (*Melencolia*; 1514), and it lost nothing of its appeal in the following centuries. Kopp's recommendations as to the healthy regimen of intellectuals seem to be very close to Dürer's personification of melancholy. Kopp believes that such people occupy their minds with such strain that they must chase the ensuing somber feelings away by various relaxing ways in order to

58 *Collectio salernitana* V., ed. Salvatore de Renzi (Naples: Filiatre-Sebezio, 1859), 49.

59 *O zachování dobrého zdraví* (see note 39), Z₁r–Z₁v.

60 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 11r.

61 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 11v.

62 Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 28), 50v.

retain sanity. An intellectual should therefore alternate serious and light subjects in his or her ponderings and must exercise, walk in nature, and indulge in easy talks with friends after work.⁶³

The *regimina sanitatis* in general depart from the concept of illness, which can be best described as holistic.⁶⁴ Illness in this sense does not exist as an entity of its own; it is rather a condition which can be defined as an absence of health. And health is precisely the subject crucial for the genre of *regimina sanitatis*. According to the given texts, the main precondition of health is observing harmony in the elementary expressions of human life, among them also emotions. This is also why the *regimina* represent an extraordinary source of information about the medieval ideas concerning mental health.

Unhealthy physical expressions thus have negative consequences for temper. It seems that exemplary here is, on the one hand, the fear of plague—a typical mental experience which, in turn, can also cause this physical disease. On the other hand, it is excessive wine drinking, an activity which is physical and which in effect weakens mental capabilities and can even lead to insanity, i.e., mental disease. Illnesses as such are discussed in the *regimina sanitatis* only marginally. The texts often mention anger, but as a risk factor endangering mental and also physical health instead of as a disease. The only mental disease which these *regimina sanitatis* discuss in more detail is thus lovesickness—but, again, in connection with the fact that a mind troubled by love harms the body and physical health. Finally, we can conclude that the medieval interpretation of mental health in its basic outlines did not dramatically differ from the modern discourse. It may suffice if we, again, remind ourselves of the everlasting maxim: *Good cheer leads to a better and longer life*. This simple recommendation clearly deduces that a positive attitude boosts physical condition; and it also underlines the mutual relationship between body and mind, which had already been described many centuries earlier and never ceased to hold true—not even nowadays.

⁶³ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovni a dokonaly regiment zdravi* (see note 28), 62v. See also the contributions to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek, Thomas Willard, and Allison P. Coudert.

⁶⁴ Giorgio Cosmacini, *Le spade di Damocle: Paure e malattie nella storia* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 2006), 4.

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Magic Healing and Embodied Sensory Faculties in Camillo Leonardi's *Speculum Lapidum*¹

Medieval and Renaissance medical manuals are notoriously difficult to read and to interpret because information is often delivered in a succinct and telegraphic manner. Renaissance manuals on lithotherapy—a branch of medicine that relied on the occult and magical healing virtues of precious and semi-precious stones—are particularly difficult because they generally omit information on the proper use of the stones, as well as refuse to provide detailed discussions on ceremonial preparations of the stones, their astrological influences and the carving of images believed to potentiate or channel the stones' powers, all in an effort to avoid possible accusations of ceremonial magic. In dealing with such documents, it behooves us, then, to ask first how should we read a sixteenth-century manual on lithotherapy? What can it reveal about early Renaissance conceptions of health, mind and body and their interactions with a cosmos envisioned as a web of interpenetrative forces of natural magic, whose intersections could be manipulated or, as Alchemists hoped, transformed? The manual in question is Camillo Leonardi's *Speculum Lapidum*, published in 1502 in Venice by Giovanni Battista Sessa il Vecchio and dedicated to Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, son of Pope Alexander IV (Fig. 1).² The tome may be considered one of the most comprehensive lapidaries on thaumaturgical magic, which entailed the knowledge of specific virtues of singular stones, as well as their astrological and planetary connotations. It includes descriptions of two hundred and fifty precious and semi-precious stones, along with their occult virtues, as well as the description of ninety-two magical engraved images that may be classified as astrological, mythological and erotic. To a great extent a summa of knowledge from late antiquity and the Middle Ages, the tome offers valuable insights into Renaissance notions of magic and medicine. While Leonardi's conception of the healing properties of gems may have deep roots in the ancient and medieval past, these notions are

1 A debt of heartfelt gratitude is owed to Rose Tozer and Paula Rucinski, M.L.S., G.G., respectively Senior Librarian and Library Manager, of the Richard T. Liddicoat Gemological Library and Information Center at the Gemological Institute of America, Carlsbad, CA. Without their precious assistance and infinite patience this research would not have been possible.

2 Camillo Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (Venice: Ioannem Baptistam Sessa, 1502).

firmly articulated against the Renaissance's Neoplatonic vision of the figure of the physician as a magus, a transformation that had been fully developed and articulated by Marsilio Ficino a mere ten years prior in his *De Vita Libri Tres*, published in 1489.³ Furthermore, Neoplatonism provided Ficino and Leonardi a framework through which the sensory faculty of seeing and touching could be conceived of as embodied faculties that were the root cause of illness and healing, and on which the forces of natural magic could operate to return the body to its ideal state of equilibrium.

Focusing on a sixteenth-century manual of natural magic is additionally important because this period is most often understood as a century of medical discoveries and advancements which constituted an early scientific revolution that shifted people's understanding of nature and the body away from Aristotelian natural philosophy toward what we today call the hard sciences, i.e., biology, chemistry, botany, anatomy, and medicine.⁴ Andreas Vesalius's anatomical atlas *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, published in 1543, though not the first work of its kind, is commonly seen as the first manifestation of the emergence of a truly sci-

3 Marsilio Ficino, *De Vita Libri Tres or The Three Books on Life*, ed. Carol V. Kaske and John Richard Clark. Medieval and Renaissance Text and Studies, 57 (Binghamton, NY: Renaissance Society of America, 1989). The work consist of three sections or books, *De Vita Sana*, *De Vita Longa*, and *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*. It is in this third section that Ficino discusses talismans, images, and natural magic. Perhaps Paracelsus comes closest to Ficino in implying the physician's independence from Christian religion. Philip Ball, *The Devil's Doctor: Paracelsus and the World of Renaissance Magic and Science* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). For a panoramic survey of Renaissance philosophy and Ficino's place within it, see *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Daniel Pickering Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000); and Walter Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism in Renaissance Medicine*, ed. Marianne Winder (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985). On Ficino specifically, see *Ficino and Renaissance Neo-Platonism*, ed. Konrad Eisenblicher and O. Z. Pugliese (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1986); Brian P. Copenhaver, "Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino," *Renaissance Quarterly* 37.4 (1984): 523–44; Michael J. B. Allen and Valery Rees with Martin Davies, *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002); *Marsilio Ficino*, ed. Angela Voss (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2006).

4 For a concise survey of the historical development of medicine and the key figures that made it possible, see James J. Garber, *Harmony in Healing* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Transaction Publishers, 2008). See also Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Ian MacLean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

entific approach toward the body, its functions and therefore its illnesses.⁵ Yet, the textual evidence suggests a much more complicated and nuanced situation. This is after all the century in which the alchemist John Dee was active at the court of Elizabeth I of England and of the Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, where he was invited by Adalbert Alask, prince of Poland and Count Palatine of Sira-dia.⁶ In reality, during this delicate moment in humanity's intellectual history, the medical scientific approach to the body stood side by side with one infused by magic and alchemy, as best represented by the work produced by Paracelsus.⁷

Leonardi's tome certainly belongs to this second camp, for it is infused with ideas of the occult thaumaturgical properties of both matter and engraved images: healing virtues that operated on the four humors and on the mental faculty of imagination through both sight and touch. Illness could arise from an imbalance of the Galenic four humors⁸—whether that was an excess or a deficiency—which could then lead to an imbalance in the faculty of imagination, though the latter alone could also be a root cause of illness. Imagination, in fact,

5 Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* (Basel: Ex Officina Joannis Oporini, 1543). An annotated edition can be accessed on the web at Northwestern University: <http://vesalius.northwestern.edu> (last accessed on Nov. 9, 2013). Vesalius's work was the first to include detailed and extensive illustrative plates of dissections that had been witnessed by the artists, thus ensuring a correct 'image' record of proceedings discussed in the text.

6 Peter J. French, *John Dee: the World of an Elizabethan Magus* (New York: Routledge Press, 1987); Glyn Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England: John Dee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); Gyorgy E. Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004); Nicholas Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge Press, 2013); Gertrude M. Hort, *Dr. John Dee: Elizabethan Mystic and Astrologer* (1923; Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2011).

7 Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine*, ed. Mark Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958). W. H. R. Rivers, *Medicine, Magic and Religion* (1924; New York: Routledge Classics, 2001); Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Dan Burton and David Grandy, *Magic, Mystery and Science: The Occult in Western Civilization* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004); Philip Ball, *The Devil's Doctor: Paracelsus and the World of Renaissance Magic and Science* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). See also the contributions to this volume by Andrew Weeks and Thomas Willard, and cf. also the discussion of Paracelsus in Albrecht Classen's Introduction.

8 The four humors were phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile. William E. Burns, *The Scientific Revolution: an Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC – CLIO, 2001); *Blood, Sweat and Tears: the Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* ed. Manfred Horstmannshoff, Helen King, and Claus Zittel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

was not merely conceived of as an aesthetic faculty, but also as a fundamental psychological function that could give rise to melancholia, hysteria, demonic possession, and sadness.⁹ Sight was the central sensory organ that could lead to such imbalances, thus it is also through sight of specific objects and images that healing could take place.¹⁰

Astrology and Healing

According to Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, humors were directly influenced by planetary energies¹¹: the second century C.E. astronomer solidified the doctrine of the correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, whereby each astral body had its analogical equivalent on earth—a fundamental tenet of the notion of magic. Healing, therefore, was also ruled by planetary energies that could be deployed through the use of sympathetic magic. The hermetic aphorism of the Emerald tablet (aka *Smaragdine Table* or *Tabula Smaragdina*), which was known to virtually all Renaissance thinkers from Ficino onwards, begins by stating that very notion:

"Tis true without lying, certain & most true. / That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below."¹²

As medieval images of zodiacal men found in astrological and astronomical calendars show,¹³ an individual's body was thus understood as subjected to and

9 German Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychopathology Since the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

10 The virtual and magical powers of stones must have not been wholly forgotten in the eighteenth century, as seen in the practice of lavishly decorating holy relics with pearls, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etc., or at least with glass paste meant to evoke the precious materials. See Paul Koudounaris, *Heavenly Bodies, Cult Treasures and Spectacular Saints from the Catacombs* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013).

11 Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940).

12 Sir Isaac Newton's translation, Keynes Ms.28, King's College Library, Cambridge University. *The Chymistry of Isaac Newton*, ed. William R. Newman, June 2010 online at: <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/search?text1=iunp&field1=dlpid&smode=browse&rmode=none&brand=newton&startDoc=11> (last accessed on March 16, 2014).

13 As discussed by Monica Winiarczyk, "Homo Signorum: Looking to God or Looking to the Stars? The Role of the Body in Medieval Christianity," *Abraxas International Journal of Esoteric Studies* 1 (2013): 42–52.

regulated by the macrocosmic influence of specific constellations: the body's health and illness could be thought of as an embodied response to external influences. Surgeries and all manners of medical interventions had to take place in accordance with astrological/astronomical considerations. Since illness resulted from an alteration of the balance of the humors, and therefore an alteration or interruption of the appropriate astral influences, it followed that these could be redressed by exposing the body to the counter influences. Thus a wet cold illness would be fought with a dry hot influence.¹⁴

A 1583 (?) woodcut with the rather longish but descriptive title of *A Seated Woman Giving Birth Aided by a Midwife and Two Other Attendants, and in the Back Two Men Looking at the Stars and Plotting a Horoscope* (Fig. 2) shows a physician sitting in front of the mother-to-be, who is seated, fully dressed, on a birthing chair, as the physician fumbles under her skirts thus preserving her modesty and protecting the viewer's sensibilities. The print, though, is less concerned with illustrating a birth, or the proper medical techniques to be used in assisting a birthing mother than with the astrological dimensions. In juxtaposition to the medical intervention in the front, the background shows two astrologers engaged in the difficult task of casting a horoscope of the child, or possibly calculating the appropriate medical response according to the patient's horoscope. The two processes, the birth and the outlining of the astrological chart, are shown contemporaneously as if to highlight the stress and perils of each. By representing the birth, which was certainly perceived as fraught with dangers, and by associating it with the casting of the horoscope, the artist allows the viewer to perceive the difficulty and danger in both. As a child is born, so is a fate that can only be understood by looking at the stars. A correct forecast would be as critical as a birth properly carried out, for that forecast will follow the child throughout his or her life, all subsequent medical interventions to be calculated accordingly.

The notion that this image is mostly interested in the astrological aspect rather than the physical components of birth is further bolstered by the fact that medieval and Renaissance representations of physicians and their patients rarely depict a cure but rather show the physician (or quack) taking stock of the patients' symptoms, as in the earlier woodcut.¹⁵ Traditionally, in paintings for

¹⁴ Medical astrology and the use of talismans are discussed by a number of fifteenth-century sources: Giorgio Anselmi in his *Astronomia* and *Opus de Magia Disciplina* (mid-fifteenth century), Marsilio Ficino in his *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* (1489); and Girolamo Torrella in his *Opus praeclarum de Imaginibus Astrologicis* (1496) to name a few.

¹⁵ See, for example, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Extractions of the Stone of Madness (the Cure of Folly)*, ca. 1494, Madrid, Museo del Prado, which is generally understood as a critique of the damages inflicted by quacks, as is Jan Sanders van Hemseens, *The Surgeon (Extracting the Stone*

example, healing or curing is imaged as the purview of God, Christ, the Virgin, and or a saint, who intervened on behalf of the sufferer and wrought a miraculous overnight cure.¹⁶ The paucity of representations of healing at the hands of physicians is not only notable but underscores that God is truly the only Medicus and natural magic and astrology may be the keys to understanding the divine text of one's life. Given that God/Christ etc. were truly the only healers, it is not wholly unsurprising that natural magic held a pre-eminent position in the physician's approach to healing his patients. Magic and incantation in a medical manual may thus be seen as a pointed reminder that spirituality was a vital and central com-

of Madness), ca. 1550, Madrid, Museo del Prado. Other images offer a straightforward representation of physical examinations, such as Guido Da Vigevano, *Physician Examining a Sick Man*, 1345, Chantilly, Musée Condé, or Jan Steen *The Doctor's Visit* 1660–1665, Philadelphia Art Museum. Dentistry seems to be the only type of medical intervention which might be said to be imagined as providing a 'cure' of sorts, though some images appear to indulge on the rather painful aspects of the surgery rather than a cure, or on the performative aspects of the profession; see for example Gerritt van Honthorst, *The Dentist*, 1622, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie; and Giandomenico Tiepolo, *The Tooth Puller*, 1754, Paris, Musée du Louvre. Images like those by Adriaen Brouwer, *The Back Operation*, 1636–1637, Frankfurt a. M., Städelches Kunstinstitut; and Gaspare Traversari, *The Wound*, ca. 1750, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia; or *The Surgery*, by the same artist, 1753–1754, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, seem to focus, too, on the patient's pain during the procedure rather than showing surgery as healing.

16 Images showing healing as the result of God's direct intervention, or through his saintly intermediaries, occur since the early middle ages and were often commissioned as ex-votos or to illustrate a saint's biography well into the nineteen century. The following is a brief excursus of such motif in painting from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Miracle of Saint Francis Healing Bartholomew of Narni*, 1235, Pescia (Pistoia), Church of San Francesco; *Constantine Prepares to Kill the Innocents*, 1246, fresco, Rome Santi Quattro Coronati, Chapel of St. Sylvester which shows Constantine miraculous cure at the hands of St. Sylvester and his subsequent conversion to Christianity; or anonymous member of the circle of Erri, *The miracle of the Reattachment of the Foot by Saint Peter Martyr*, fifteenth-century, Parma, Galleria Nazionale; *Saint Luke Performs an Operation*, fifteenth- or sixteenth-century, Madrid Museo del Prado; Matthias Grünewald, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, 1512–1516, Colmar, Musée d'Unterlinden, shows ergotism as one of the many evils or demons conquered by the saint; Tintoretto, *Saint Roch Healing the Plague victims*, 1549, Venice San Rocco; Tintoretto, *Saint Augustine Heals the Cripples*, ca. 1550, Vicenza, Museo Civico; Ambrosius Francken the Elder, *Cosmas and Damien*, late sixteenth-century, Antwerp, Musée Royaux des Beaux-arts, in which Cosmas and Damien attend to an amputee; Guido Reni, *The Severed Hand of Saint John Damascen is Restored by an Angel*, 1609–1612, Rome, Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, Pauline Chapel; Giovanni Battista Crespi (il Cerano) *Miracle of Aurelia degli Angeli*, 1610, Milan Cathedral; Antonio Giarola, *Verona Suppliant at the Feet of the Trinity*, 1630, Verona, San Fermo Maggiore, Chapel of the Conception images a desperate personification of the city of Verona imploring for Divine intervention to liberate the city from the Plague.

ponent of medicine.¹⁷ All healing was ultimately possible thanks to God's will; we are still a long way from the eighteenth-century conception of a science separate and independent from the divine. To complicate matters, of course it is also true that scientific images, as defined by today's standards, had begun to emerge in this very same period, as illustrated for example by the 1559 image of a physician correcting a prolapsed uterus found in Caspar Stroyman's *Die Handschrift des Schnitt- und Augenartzes Caspar Stroyman in Lindau am Bodensee*. It may very well be among the first images of a physician shown in the act of healing (Fig. 3).

In this regard, natural magic made use of the tools provided by God, be those plants, herbs, or stones. Leonardi's organization of the stones by color first rather than by name suggests that he wished to emphasize their occult virtues, which were directly correlated to color. Unlike the fifteenth century *De Hortus Sanitatis*, the *Speculum Lapidum* lists the stones in alphabetical order only after having established a color order.¹⁸ This list (two hundred and fifty stones) is worth a brief excursus here, as it gives us a sense of the illnesses that most troubled Renaissance people. Poison was a primary concern: twenty-three stones are listed as having the ability to heal any poison, including diamonds, amber, hematite, and bezoars. Next comes the need to strengthen vision or cure various forms of eye disorders, to which are devoted twenty-two stones—including emeralds, sapphires, agates, beryls, heliotropes, opals, etc.). Since vision, as mentioned before, played a fundamental role in the balance of a person's imagination, and therefore his or her health, it is not surprising that curing vision was as important as battling poison. After healing or protecting vision, we find, in order of importance, various physical ailments from teeth aches to stomach aches, to wounds, to giving birth, to swelling and abscesses: each is given an average of nine to ten stones. But it is those ailments that today we would call psychological or psychiatric that seem to have been of most concern: nine stones are invoked against melancholia, seven against night terrors and bad dreams, five against madness, or lunatics/frenetics, and thirteen against demons/possession/sorcery. Amethysts, balassius, and carbuncles were considered aids in repressing evil thoughts. Just as great a concern seems to have been the repression of lust, for which eight stones were efficacious.

17 Anne Van Arsdall, "Reading Medieval Medical Texts with an Open Mind," *Textual Healing: Essay on Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*, ed. Elizabeth Lane Furdell. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 110 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 9–30.

18 The *Hortus Sanitatis*, attributed to Joannes de Cuba, was one of the most popular and well-known compendiums listing the medicinal qualities of animals, fish, birds and minerals. It was printed at the end of the fifteenth century in Germany in a number of copies: a 1485 edition was printed by K. Kölbl and a 1491 edition printed in Mainz by Jacob Meydenbach. Sections of the text appear to be a modified Latin translation of the German *Herbarius*.

Being cheerful, amiable, graceful etc. was probably understood as an antidote to melancholia and deserved at least twelve stones. In contrast, scrofula, a form of tuberculosis also known as the King's illness, as kings were reputed to have the magical power to heal it,¹⁹ could be healed with only two stones.

The modern reader cannot but feel puzzled as to the principles governing the gems' healing properties: different stones seem to be beneficial to similar issues, while a single stone could be beneficial to multiple conditions bearing no resemblance or connection to each other. Furthermore, some of the benefits given by the stones do not relate to either physical or mental ailments, but rather to such diverse problems as tempests or increase of wealth. To complicate matters further, discussing emotional or mental disorders, which today would be considered pertinent to the realm of psychology or psychiatry, is extremely tricky for us, as they all demand to some extent that we consider the epistemological structure of imagination. As German Berrios suggests, it is, first, problematic to distinguish between biology and psychology, since in this time period life and soul were overlapping concepts. All mental conditions were of course understood as embodied conditions, arising from the body and living within the body, thus the visible alteration of the mind is nothing other than a manifestation, a symptom of the body's alteration.²⁰ Second, it is problematic to try to discern what exactly is meant by such labels as 'madness' or 'hypochondrical melancholia,' for example, particularly as meanings of such disorders changed through centuries; what a sixteenth-century individual meant by melancholia seems to include schizoid affects, psychotic breakdown and perhaps even schizophrenia.²¹ Nonetheless, I would argue that this material appears to be a hodgepodge only on the surface. In his list of occult virtues, Leonardi does not spell out the fact that each stone is formed under specific astral influences, which thus govern these said virtues. This necessary discussion is instead implied at another point in his treatise, in

19 Such kingly cures are illustrated in a sixteenth-century woodcut showing King Edward exercising the royal touch to a scrofula victim. von Orley, *Charlemagne Receiving the Relics of the Passion and Preparing to Touch Scrofula Victims* (Turin: Galleria Sabaudia, first half of the fifteenth-century), suggests that such healing powers came directly from God.

20 Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms* (see note 9).

21 Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms* (see note 9). While descriptions of *melancholia* seem to point to diverse categories of mental illness, it was almost represented by a lonely figure. The most famous representation of *Melancholia* is Albrecht Dürer's engraving, *Melancholia*, 1514, London, British Museum. Madness, as understood today, is not imaged as such until the nineteenth century; Théodore Géricault's images of madness might be among the most famous of that century; see for example, *Madwoman with a Mania of Envy (The Hyena of Salpêtrière)*, 1822–1823, Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

Book 1, where he explains the manner in which stones are formed.. Consequently, prior to the use of each gem, it would have been good medical, as well as magical practice to assess carefully the patient's illness/need by consulting his/her astrological chart, thus addressing a deficiency or redressing a problem caused by an alteration of the four humors.

For the purposes of this essay, though, let us not distinguish biology and psychology and see if we may make sense of the material under examination. Illnesses themselves were symbols of something else. They were symptoms of imbalances, and the actual physical or mental symptoms could point out to the root nature of the imbalance, be that of Galenic humors alone or of a spiritual imbalance. Magic was an ideal tool to address imbalances born in the body and manifested in the mind.²²

Neoplatonic Conceptions of the Cosmos

In the world of natural magic the universe was understood as a perfectly balanced system of correspondences between the macrocosm and microcosm, where the macrocosm was conceived as a living organism constituted by a series of intrinsically interlinked elements, and where each astral body had its analogical equivalent on earth. Like all physical entities, bodies and their processes were understood to be governed by such divine influences. In the Renaissance natural magic was also understood as a practical application of a philosophy of nature that had its roots in Neo-Platonism. There was only one universal law that dominated the macrocosm, and everything under that law could be glimpsed by looking at the microcosm. Seeing and looking at matter were ways of knowing.

As a Neoplatonist, Ficino conceived of the magus in a manner that upheld the Christian dualistic view of the world while emphasizing continuity as a principle that united the whole cosmos. Man's soul was the intermediary between the world of the spirit and matter²³ and as such the soul was thought of as an astral

²² For the role of healing magic since antiquity in addressing mental illnesses, see *The History of Psychotherapy: From Healing Magic to Encounter*, ed. Jan Ehrenwald (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1976). To better comprehend how symptoms or signs came to be understood as related to specific illnesses, see Ian Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²³ Ficino would have recognized in Gnosticism a precursor of Christian dualism, and Plato would have appeared as "the 'Patriarch of the Gnostics,' while Gnosticism could be understood as a 'Christian Platonism.'" Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism* (see note 3), 127

body that “was not body and almost soul and not soul and almost body.”²⁴ The soul acted as an intermediary in a world that could be seen as “a closed system of emanations leading from the highest divinity down to coarse matter, to stone, metal, and dirt.”²⁵ Matter was the lowest step, God was the highest, and man, at the center of this web, could use all intermediaries at his disposal to access that divine energy. Man's body could thus be envisioned as a microcosm “for in him all constituents of the world are represented.”²⁶ God was the ultimate healer for only God offered redemption, the magus could only dedicate himself to a similar redemption through the manipulation and purification of matter, and most importantly of his own soul. The healer/magus could read the cosmic web to identify best the day and specific moment of intervention according to the appropriate astral influences that would allow him to defeat evil or base matter, manifested in the form of disease “The Magus applied the principle of sympathy: everywhere like yearns to unite with like.”²⁷ Stones, whether precious or semi-precious, were particularly favored because, as Leonardi stated, they were nearly indestructible; unlike metals, even precious gold, they could not be smelted. Perhaps most importantly, some gems were found to bear images that appeared to have been naturally engraved without the intervention of a human hand.²⁸ Such images could only be a divine manifestation to be interpreted and appropriately used solely by a devout and well-prepared magus/physician.

Clearly, Ficino's conception of the relationship between microcosmic and macrocosmic reality owed much to the Middle Ages, but in his “attempts not only to use but also to manipulate the heavens, Ficino was treading on ground that had been viewed with suspicion throughout the Middle Ages.”²⁹ In the third book of the *De Vita*³⁰ Ficino does not limit himself to naturally occurring images; he is far more interested in man's manipulation of the astral forces through the cre-

24 Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism* (see note 3), 128. See also Emily Michael, “Renaissance Theories of Body, Soul and Mind,” *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment*, ed. John P. Wright and Paul Potter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 147–72, for a comprehensive discussions of various Renaissance theories beyond the Neoplatonic; a number of other essays in this same volume discuss earlier conceptions of the mind-body relationship that had a bearing on Renaissance notions of the same.

25 Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism* (see note 3), 128.

26 Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism* (see note 3), 128.

27 Pagel, *Religion and Neo-Platonism* (see note 3), 130.

28 Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum*, (see note 3), book 3.

29 Christopher S. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press), 107.

30 Ficino, *De Vita Libri Tres or The Three Books on Life* (see note 3).

ation of amulets according to specific astral conjunctions and influences. Ficino's clear suggestion that it was possible thus to capture and harness the astral forces of natural magic through man-made images was highly problematic and bordered on the realm of dark magic. For if man could truly summon such forces through magic, these forces could only be demonic. Natural magic's operational principle, in fact, could only see man as a passive recipient and never as an active agent in his own healing. Leonardi was certainly aware of the difficulties Ficino had encountered with *De Vita* which lead to the latter's refutations of his controversial text a mere six months after its publication in 1489.

Thus, on the one hand, Leonardi is very careful to state in his *Speculum Lapidum* that images on engraved gems have no power per se, echoing the Ficinian defense against possible accusations of dark magic. On the other hand, Leonardi often contradicted himself, as Ficino had done, and made clear references to ceremonial magic. As Ficino stated "I will have warned you here at the outset that you must not think I approve the use of images, only recount it,"³¹ so Leonardi often repeated that he was merely retelling what others had already said or stated. The reliance on the *auctoritas* of the past was here not just a reflection of the literary practices of the period but acted as a necessary screen of protection. Yet, Ficino had also commented:

it would be unduly curious and perhaps harmful to recite what images they fashioned and how, for the mutual meetings of minds or their alienation, for bringing felicity or inflicting calamity, either to some individual, or to a household, or to a city. I do not affirm that such things can be done. Astrologers, however, think such things can be done, and they teach the method, but I dare not tell it.³²

While Ficino appears to be skeptical regarding the possibility that images and incantations could influence a person's well-being, his final assertion contradicts his earlier statement and implies that he knew the method through which one could create such powerful talismans and incantations. In book three, in fact, Ficino amply discusses the engraving practice of talismans. Perhaps conscious of Ficino's contradictions and the consequences they had, Leonardi consistently and obsessively attempts to eschew his predecessor's problems in a two-fold manner: 1. he never states when or how an image should be carved; and 2. every entry that discusses images thought to have the power to harness and convey magical/astral influences, begins with the formulaic "if you find." Thus Leonardi's tome moves all human-made images into the realm of the naturally occur-

31 Ficino, *De Vita Libri Tres* or *The Three Books on Life* (see note 3), 3.15: 320–21.

32 Ficino, *De Vita Libri Tres* or *The Three Books on Life* (see note 3), 3.18: 340–41.

ring: images are merely encountered, they appear to have never been humanly 'fashioned,' thus restoring the user to his passive agency and to the secure field of natural magic. In each entry the user, then, is envisioned as looking at the image, touching it, wearing it, but never having caused its engraving. Images are chanced upon as if by divine will. Having removed man's agency in the magical healing process, Leonardi restores to man the right relationship with God and the cosmic forces that influence his body. The Magus is the only knowledgeable interpreter of the natural world, of God's will manifested in the stars, and of what the body may need. In this manner the body claims a central role, for it is through its sensory faculties of touch and sight that the magical processes operates. The object, through which the magical forces are absorbed, is the active agent (by God's will) that impresses itself on the human body. Leonardi's entire text relies on the notion of embodied vision and its fundamental role in natural magic processes.

Embodied Faculties of Seeing and Touching

It is not uncommon for scholars to think that the encounter of Italian culture with a belief in the practices of natural magic began with Ficino's *De Vita* and ended with his own apologia a mere six months after the publication of the former. Camillo Leonardi's treatise contradicts such a scholarly construction. His *Speculum Lapidum* shows that Ficinian notions were well entrenched into the medical practices of the sixteenth century and thus helped frame the act of seeing within the world of magic correspondences. Just as in many texts from the Middle Ages, so in Leonardi's text, the act of seeing points to an implied indexicality: seeing and beholding a precious gem was to see and behold a mark made by an invisible divine force. As he wrote,

gems and metals although they seem too hard for accepting a celestial influence, nevertheless retain it longer if they receive it . . . that is to say their hardness also retains the vestiges and fits of the life of the world, which they had once possessed while embedded in the earth, for a very long time after being rooted out.³³

Just as gems and precious and semiprecious stones had held on to the celestial influences received while being formed and shaped in the bosom of the earth, so they could now pass on those astral energies by impressing their virtues onto

³³ Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p., translation is my own.

the mind and body of the wearer: on the body via direct contact, on the mind via sight. In both cases, body or mind, were thought to receive such sense impressions like wax received the impression of a seal. Such notion, commonly attributed to Aristotle, was often referenced in sixteenth-century medical manuals,³⁴ suggesting that the act of seeing was universally understood as an embodied experience, i.e., manuals held as true a direct connection between the eye and the object beheld, which put the body at the center of it all. Interestingly, in the past fifteen years, scholarly reassessment of how man comes to see and to know has highlighted the ways in which the body is central to thinking, perception and processing of emotions and feelings.³⁵ The new discipline of 'somaesthetics' has aimed at reassessing the relationship between image making and the body by stressing the body as a sentient center of the aesthetic experience and supporting its claims through hard scientific data. Unlike in the early modern period, though, in this modern conception of the relationship between knowledge and the body, the object beheld remains an inert entity. In the medieval and renaissance period, instead, the object was invested with an agency so very similar to the one we today attribute to the subject. Lacan's anecdote of the fisherman Petit-Jean ominously pointing out to the future psychoanalyst that a sardine-can floating in the waves and glittering in the sun did not see him, and its implication that the

34 Cf. Giulio Mancini, *Della Ginnastica, della Musica e della Pittura* Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, (Barb. Lat. 4315, fols 190^v–206^v); Spencer Pearce, "Intellect and Organization and Fracastoro Turrius," *The Cultural Heritage of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honor of T. G. Griffith*, ed. C. E. J. Griffiths and Robert A. B. G. Hastings. (Lewiston, NY: Edward Mello Press, 1993) 235–260; Katherine Park, "Psychology" the Organic Soul" in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 470–72; and Frances Gage, Illness, Invention and Truth in Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, "Gifts in Return: Essays in Honour of Charlse Dempsey", ed. Melinda Wilcox Schlitt. *Essays & Studies*, 30 (Toronto: Center for Refromation and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 337–62. Frances Gage's work, in general, is essential in understanding the connection between images and healing.

35 Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Richard Schusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011); David Freedberg, *Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginnings of Modern Natural History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003); Semir Zeki *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and John Onians *Neuroarthistory: From Aristotle and Pliny to Baxandall and Zeki* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); and David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, "Motion, Emotion and Empathy in Aesthetic Experience," *Trends in Cognitive Science* 11.5 (2007): 197–203.

subject is always potentially seen or unseen, would have been rather self-evident to a man of the early modern period.³⁶ In fact, the subject would have known concretely and not by psychoanalytic or by psychological intuition that he could also be seen. He was seen not only by God but also by all that God created, including rocks, mountains, stone and gems. Seeing and being seen were acts fraught with anxiety and peril that went well beyond the psychological because seeing in early modern culture had direct physical implications. Both Ficino and Leonardi, in fact, as mentioned above, remind us that pregnant women who looked upon the ugly or horrific gave birth to monsters, for the ugly and the horrific could and did look back. Such notions bear the echo of the Aristotelian conception of imaginative seeing in which the imagination received sense impressions as if it were a wax stamped by a signet ring. The mind could be stamped with visual ideas, and thus for Renaissance thinkers the body could then bear the physical remainder of such 'stamping.' Objects were thought to emanate images that impressed themselves on mind and body, thus indicating that seeing had both emotional, psychological, and physical connotations.

Alberti, in his treatise on painting (1435), notes that seeing another person experiencing an emotion would evoke a similar emotion in the subject; a notion that anticipates the modern discovery of mirror neurons.³⁷ Leonardo da Vinci's subsequent statement that a painter always painted himself because he was influenced by *giudizio* is revelatory of the belief in a mental activity, an unconscious mental activity that influences our manner of seeing and therefore our manner of doing.³⁸ While these modes of seeing have already been noted by other scholars, what has escaped notice is that these notions of seeing emerged in a period in which magic and occult virtues of objects were an essential feature of the early modern *Weltanschauung*.

Leonardi's tome, and for that matter Ficino's *De Vita*, are not unique in implying sight as the vehicle for illness or healing. Their closest precursor, the late fifteenth-century *De Hortus Sanitatis*, actually illustrated the placement of stones near the eyes, thus stressing that gems' thaumaturgical powers could be absorbed not only by ingesting ground gems or by wearing a specific stone on

³⁶ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Book XI), ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1998).

³⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* ed. John R. Spencer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 24–27 and 130.

³⁸ Leonardo da Vinci, *Treatise on Painting*, ed. A. Philip McMahon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), vol. 1: 86.

the body, but also by looking at it.³⁹ The practice of grounding precious stones for healing purposes is well attested: Lorenzo (il Magnifico) de' Medici, Phillip II of Spain, Popes Leo X and Clement VII are just a few of the individuals known to have been treated at the end of their lives with potions of inestimable value consisting of ground rubies, diamonds, emeralds, etc.⁴⁰ But a stone's healing benefits could also be deployed by attaching it to the body part to be healed. A number of woodcuts from the *Hortus Sanitatis* show the manner in which the stones were to be used, ranging from applying a stone directly to a patient's eye to wearing a stone set in a ring, which seems to have been a favorite manner to wear thaumaturgical talismans (Figs. 4 and 5). Indeed, Camillo Leonardi's suggestion that stones be worn only as rings was possibly influenced by the early modern centuries' notion of how images were impressed onto the imagination, and which was attributed to the hallow Greek philosopher Aristotle.⁴¹

Leonardi does not directly explicate this aspect of astral magic, most likely because by the time he wrote his manual this was understood to be the operative principle at work. Ficino, who was among the first Renaissance thinkers to insert

39 Neither Ficino's nor Leonardi's works are illustrated, thus the *De Hortus Sanitatis* is particularly interesting and relevant here for its illustrations and the manner in which the occult virtues are imaged therein.

40 Did the stones work? In some cases it is clear that they could actually work. A pearl dissolved in an acidic medium, such as vinegar, is nothing other than an early modern version of an Alka-Seltzer, the primary ingredient of which is nothing other than a calcium carbonate. Naturally this would be a rather expensive digestive, but that digestive function is indeed one of the virtues attributed to pearls. In some cases most likely one has to take into account the placebo effect, whose power modern medicine is now recognizing and willing to accept as a curative aid, but in some cases it is clear that there is deep skepticism at the power of a gem, it being ingested or merely gazed at to either cure or protect from evil spirits.

41 The importance of rings in a catholic country of course is not be underestimated. Not only could bishop's rings be miraculous in themselves, but perhaps the most important, though, disputed relic in a shape of a ring, would have been the ring of the Virgin Mary herself, held at the cathedra of Orvieto. The Ring of San Zenobius in Florence, too, had long been the object of veneration because of its miraculous healing powers, and when requested in the fifteenth-century by the suffering French king, the Medici dared as much as to send a fake relic. Their ploy discovered, the real relic was soon dispatched to the ailing king; see Sally J. Cornelion, "A French King and a Magic Ring: the Girolami and a Relic of St. Zenobius in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 (2002): 437–48. The distribution of rings with curative powers by the English kings. This is not a complete sentence. In most of these stories what we have often ignored is the materiality of the rings itself. The early modern person would have recognized an object as a ring miraculous not only in recognition of the saintliness and power of the person that once wore it, but because of the specific stone the ring bore in its setting.

natural magic into a Neoplatonist optic, had stated it clearly. He recommended, for example, the absorption of solar energies by wearing 'solar things':

if you want your body and spirit to receive power from some member of the cosmos, say from the Sun, seek the things which above all are most Solar among metals and gems, still among plants, and more yet among animals, especially human beings; for surely things which are more similar to you confer more of it. They must both be brought to bear externally and, so far as possible, taken internally, especially in the day and the hour of the Sun and while the Sun is dominant in a theme of the heavens. Solar things are: all those gems and flowers which are called heliotrope because they turn towards the Sun, likewise gold, orpiment and golden colors . . . amber balsam, yellow honey . . . the swan, the lion, the scarab beetle, the crocodile, and people who are blond, curly haired, prone to baldness and magnanimous. The above-mentioned things can be adapted partly to foods, partly to ointments and fumigations, partly to usages and habits. You should *frequently perceive* (italics are my own) and think about these things and love them above all; you should also get a lot of light.⁴²

Sympathetic magic is the principle obviously at work in such a conception, which was also extended to *figurative magic*. Ficino, in fact, suggests that similar energies may be absorbed by the wearing of talismanic images engraved on precious and semi-precious stones—that is intaglios. The images Ficino discusses are seen as a tool to potentiate the stone, the reason they had to be engraved at propitious times to capture the desired astral influence. Similarly, Leonardi states that stones with engravings symbolic of the zodiacal signs of Leo, Aries, or Sagittarius, for example, were believed to be appropriate to fight all illnesses considered cold in nature since those signs were instead hot, while the cold nature of Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn would be considered suitable to fight hot and humid illnesses.⁴³ But what are we to make of most of the ninety images, described in book three of his treatise, that bear no immediate reference to a zodiacal sign? How is the operative astral influence captured by such images? What is their healing virtue due to?

The answers lay in the production of the images. Images bearing no resemblance to a zodiacal sign operated in an astral manner by virtue of their being engraved at specific times of day or week or month ruled by that zodiacal sign. The source of their power was thus astrological in essence rather than in representation. The object was able to influence the body because of the subtle 'rays' it emitted: powerful positive or negative forces could influence human bodies and

⁴² Marsilio Ficino, *De Vita Libri Tres* (see note 3), Book Three, Chap. II, 249.

⁴³ Some astrological signs were also believed to be connected to specific philosophical schools or religions. Scorpio was considered the sign of Mohammed, which, according to Leonardi, explained why "he always taught fables and pure lies."

souls, particularly when their forms entered through the human eye. These were natural forces, not man-made or demon-summoned.

The notion that objects emanated rays that could influence anyone who came in contact with them was most likely assimilated into Western medieval philosophical thought through Al Kindi's ninth-century text on optics, *De Radiis Stellarum*, wherein the author stated "everything in the world . . . emits rays in every direction which fill the whole world."⁴⁴ It is because of this notion that Renaissance authors theorized a world in which the sense of sight was generative, whether that be of monstrous fetuses or of birthmarks, in which case seeing and touching participated in the creation of the unsightly. If a mother craved a fruit, such as a strawberry, and under the grips of such cravings touched herself, the child would be born with a birthmark in the shape of a strawberry, on that part of the body the mother had touched herself while carrying him in the womb. Such birthmarks in Italian are and were called *voglia/e*, thus associating the mark directly to an intense desire or craving and a failure of the will to control that wish.

Ficino, in his 1484 *De Amore* (a commentary on Plato's Symposium),⁴⁵ had synthesized Aristotelian and Platonic notions of the supremacy of sight. Leonardi absorbed them and gave the faculty of sight alone the power to identify and distinguish gems, not only because it was the sense that provided the most information about the outside world, as proposed by Aristotle, but because it recognized grace and harmony. Given such emphasis, it is no surprise that Leonardi, just like Ficino, recommended repetitive viewing or meditation or contemplation of the images as a manner to potentiate the absorption of those rays. Repeated exposure ensured better results!

The importance of repeated viewing mentioned earlier by Ficino was stressed by a number of earlier writers, including Bacon, though its source was most likely

⁴⁴ As cited in David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), 19. Al Kindi's works, several of which were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages, were known to Roger Bacon, Albert the Great, and Geronimo Cardano. Albert the Great must have known the *De Radiis Stellarum*, cf. *A Companion to Albert the Great: Theology, Philosophy, and the Sciences*, ed. Irvén Resnick. Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 460, note 30, and 470. Leonardi's seeming familiarity with Kindi's notion, then, does not need to be explained with direct knowledge of Al-Kindi's works, because it results from that process of absorption of Islamic knowledge into the body of Western literature that took place throughout the medieval period.

⁴⁵ Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* ed. Sears Jayne (Dallas, TX: Spring, 1985).

the medieval Muslim thinker Ibn al-Haytham who suggested that it was through repeated exposure to an image that a form was impressed in the soul:

A form of that kind will become ensconced in the soul, and the form will come to be impressed as a general representation in the imagination . . . [T]he forms of the objects persists in the soul . . . Thus imagining the forms of visible objects that a person saw before and still recalls when they are no longer present indicates that the forms of visible objects that sight receives reach the soul and are impressed in the imagination.⁴⁶

Today we understand the role of repeated viewing as central to the creation of specific neural pathways; in the early modern period this same principle was understood through the Aristotelian allegory for memory mentioned earlier.

An analysis of Leonardi's concept of sight reveals that it could be understood as a faculty that played a role not only in healing, but in a number of other processes closely related to it: recognition, belief, and fascination. As the passage below suggests, sight allowed the physician to discern between real and fake gems. The distinction between the real and the false was based not on specific features of the gem but rather on the ability of the object to arouse delight in the beholder:

the second manner by which natural gems may be recognized is their aspect, the more they are gazed upon the more the eyes delight; and when they are brought close to a candle's flame they shine very clearly. While in the case of those stones that are not natural, the more they are gazed upon, the more the eyes are displeased and wearied, as the stones' brightness wanes, especially when they are placed close to a candle's flame.⁴⁷

The act of recognition, then, is one of embodied seeing: the sight of the gem arouses in the viewer a pleasurable mental response that becomes the hallmark of the true nature of the matter being looked at.

Central to the arousal of pleasure was color:

and since gems are first known by sight than by their names, since indeed we come to name gems by their colors, I shall order them in alphabetical order by their color along with the gems' proper names, so that, once their name is understood, their virtues may also be understood by reading the proper entry.⁴⁸

46 As cited in Quinlan-McGrath, *Influences: Art and Optics and Astrology in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2013), 68–69.

47 Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p., translation is mine.

48 Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p.

The pleasure of recognition of the stone was also connected to the health of the body itself, because recognition of color allowed identification of the healing properties.

Sight was also the sense that confirmed that existence of the occult or magical virtues, because, as Leonardi states:

the stones' virtues may be seen with our very own eyes. Can we not see the magnet attract iron? And that the Sapphires cure certain diseases? And other similar phenomena in many other stones? Only a mad man would negate that which is as manifestly clear as the first principles.⁴⁹

Seeing therefore was also believing that which is occult and invisible. Of course this is a principle very much reflective of a religious *Weltanschauung* in which indeed seeing was believing; seeing the host was believing in Christ's presence.

Most importantly, sight was the sense through which fascination and the entrapment of another's soul or body could also take place.

"They asserted that in a similar way the stones' souls influenced men due to their proximity, and so impressed their virtues onto men's substance . . . These men used to say that the soul of a man, or of any animal entered into another man, or animal through sight, and hindered the operation of that animal. This fascination was also thought to proceed from other means besides sight, since seeing happens by receiving and not by emitting. Virgil is of this opinion when he says in the *Bucolics*: *I do not know which eye fascinates and corrupts/ my tender lambs.*"⁵⁰

According to Leonardi, this kind of fascination is seen not only in men, but also in brute animals, as Solinus and Pliny had stated and as is seen by direct experience in many other cases. "Indeed, it has often happened in Italy that a wolf gazing at a man before he was seen by that man was powerful enough to cause the man to lose his voice so that he could not scream even though before he had not experienced such a problem."⁵¹ Leonardi's passage is remarkable for a number of reasons, including the fact that a man's fascination may happen at the hands of a lower life form such as the wolf. It is also notable that the fascination happens when the wolf sees the man first: seeing is an activity that whoever uses it first may then impress the other's soul and wreak havoc with their bodies. The man in the story loses his voice, one of the principal faculties that distinguishes him from the animal, the faculty of speech.

⁴⁹ Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p.

⁵⁰ Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p.

⁵¹ Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum* (see note 3), book 2, n.p.

Leonardi indicates that stones like the onyx may be used to provoke *fascinations* (by which he means enchantments), charms or other types of visions or delusions, while others, such as the alectoria, may also be used to dispel delusions. Agates strengthened sight by being merely looked upon, though they needed to be of an Indian or Cretan type. Onyxes could also be used to heal the eyes, and in this case the stone was said to enter the eyes as if endowed with intellect. (A number of stones were believed to be found in the eyes of animals: the Kenne in the eyes of a stag, the lyncurius in the eyes of a lynx, the hyena found in the eyes of that animal.) An opal could even obfuscate the sight of others, thus rendering the wearer invisible, provided that he wrapped the stone in laurel leaf.

Even miraculous narratives recorded centuries later capture the importance of the sensory faculties of seeing and touch, suggesting that the healing notions found in Leonardi's did not wane with the lessening importance of magic. Furthermore, the following story speaks to the importance not only of seeing but also of touch, thus clearly articulating what is implied in Leonardi's manual and its emphasis on the use of thaumaturgical images set in rings. According to the records, in 1474, a certain Giuseppe Orecchio of Naples, a fifty-year-old widowed shoemaker, recounted how he had been miraculously cured of the French disease.⁵² "The occurrence has come down to us because he testified before the hearing being held in the city's Dominican monastery to investigate the cause of the saintly Dominican tertiary nun Maria Rosa Giannini, who had died six years earlier."⁵³ According to the documents "he recounted that on February 1746, a swelling or tumor begun to form and became visible in the area of my testicles, [speaking] with reverence, which spread backwards as it grew, so that after about fifteen days it reached the size of a large lemon, and it divided into three. . . each as big as above, and they caused me bitter pains worse and worse as they grew, and they kept me from sleeping and seating, or urinating freely, or having bodily evacuations, which I could not have without great pain."⁵⁴ Orecchio prayed to the nun in a rather particular way and immediately "I felt much better and I had the idea to have a quick look at the cut tumors, to which I had applied the images of the Said Servant of God from the time my daughters had brought it to me, and I had continuously kept it in those parts; so I got down from my bed. . . I got dressed into my clothes, which I had not been able to do in the past, and with anxiety I saw that the said tumors had already ceased and settled down with the

52 The anecdote is related by David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 179–82.

53 Gentilcore, *Healer and Healing* (see note 52), 179.

54 Gentilcore, *Healer and Healing* (see note 52), 179.

other parts to their natural place, as if they had never been there and the wounds [were] closed with natural skin, that you could hardly tell they had been there, having no other scar than that of a flea bite.”⁵⁵

It is remarkable that in this story, healing results not only from the act of praying to the image or seeing the image, but from having placed the image in close proximity to the body. The image of the saintly nun is placed directly in contact with the testicles, with no trace of irony or Freudian sexual implication, and it is the direct touch with the representation of the holy figure that effects the cure. The anecdote is here relevant, even though it was recorded two centuries later than Leonardi's text, because it articulates in the words of a simple patient the manner in which healing could occur. The intimate touch between the healing image and the affected body part was as essential as any prayer that might have been said. The stress on the intimacy and secrecy of the touch may also suggest that Leonardi's preference for the wearing of healing stones in ring-settings was due to the facility with which a patient could discretely handle the object, as well as to the direct contact between body and healing stone that a ring ensured. The ring implied a direct relationship between hand, mind, and astral rays: the astral influences impressed themselves on the mind, and thus the body at large, through sight and touch. The wearing of a ring would not have attracted as much attention as if one were to play with a necklace, whose pendant would have had to be purposely pulled off the body to be seen, or a broche on a garment. Rings, thus, afforded a certain level of 'privacy' that allowed the wearer that discretion so necessary to protect oneself against accusations of ceremonial magic or necromancy.⁵⁶

In conclusion, I agree with Anne van Arsdall when she states that medieval and Renaissance medical manuals do not reveal how to make a diagnosis or how actually to use a remedy because there was a larger body of oral and practical

⁵⁵ Gentilcore, *Healer and Healing* (see note 52), 179–80. Whereas Gentilcore analyzed such cures for their common narrative patterns, I am more interested in the manner in which the narratives feature sight or touch as the primary sensory function through which healing is effected. “The doctors, after having tried their remedies on the body, abandon it. The sick person reacts to the loss of his or her body by seeking a miracle. The miracle is the ‘moment of struggle when, despite the laws of nature, the defeat of the disease is decided.’ The disease ‘withdraws,’ the body is ‘liberated,’ ‘cleansed.’ The sick person has been singled out, the body reunited with the self and its functionality restored. The miracle cure is at once unique and a part of a corpus of similar cures.” Gentilcore, *Healer and Healing* (see note 52), 182.

⁵⁶ As mentioned earlier, Leonardi himself is clearly concerned with eschewing any accusation of practicing magic as revealed by his concerted efforts to not describe the act of engraving magic images, but rather presenting all engraved gems as if ‘found’ by its users.

knowledge within which the texts functioned as mnemonic devices.⁵⁷ Leonardi does not need to discuss Neoplatonic notions of vision, of the body, or of the Magus, nor does he need to outline in detail how each gem was to be prepared, for the text was meant to function as a supplement or a mnemonic device complementary to a practice well known to the initiates. As a recent scholar puts it:

the texts make sense because an unwritten text can be assumed to lie between each line of written text: that unwritten text is the voice of the teacher and the memory of the apprentice healer, neither of which we can hear The seemingly terse and imprecise remedies begin to make sense in the context of these herbal traditions and practice. In them, much of the knowledge is learned hands on and committed to memory, and texts are a secondary resource.⁵⁸

Furthermore, what none of the medieval and Renaissance texts explain is the social and psychological context in which both illness and cure were deployed. The value of Leonardi's *Speculum lapidum* is the window it provides into an important but hitherto overlooked arena of early modern medical thinking. Its notions of the embodied senses and their responses to the occult virtues of precious and semi-precious stones, as reconstructed here, demonstrate the rich interplay of powerful discursive traditions which connect magic, philosophy and visual aesthetics to the healing arts.

⁵⁷ Anne Van Arsdall, "Reading Medieval Medical Texts with an Open Mind," *Textual Healing: Essay on Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*, ed. Elizabeth Lane Furdell. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 110 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 9–30.

⁵⁸ Van Arsdall, "Reading Medieval Medical Texts with an Open Mind" (see note 57), 19.



Fig. 1. Leonardi, C. *Speculum Lapidum*. Venetia: (1502) 1610 ed. (Photo by the author—Richard T. Liddicoat Gemological Library and Information Center at the Gemological Institute of America, Carlsbad, CA).



Fig. 2. A seated woman giving birth aided by a midwife and two other attendants, and in the background two men looking at the stars and plotting a horoscope. Woodcut, 1583[?], Wellcome Library no. 16907i (Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons by-nc 2.0 UK: England & Wales).



Fig. 3. Physician correcting a prolapsed uterus, 1559. Die Handschrift des Schnitt- und Augen-
arztes Caspar Stroyman in Lindau am Bodensee by Caspar Stromayr. Wellcome Library no.
L0009586 (Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons by-nc 2.0 UK: England &
Wales).



Fig. 4. Illustration from the *Hortus Sanitatis*. 1516 ed. (photo by the author—Natural History Museum Library, San Diego, CA).



Fig. 5. Illustration from the *Hortus Sanitatis*. 1516 ed. (photo by the author—Natural History Museum Library, San Diego, CA).

Andrew Weeks (Illinois State University, Normal)

The Invisible Diseases of Paracelsus and the Cosmic Reformation

What are the “invisible diseases” to which the physician and nature philosopher Paracelsus devoted a work of that title in 1531? His cycle of writings that includes *De cavsis morborum invisibilium* (*Von den unsichtbaren Krankheiten vnd ihren Vrsachen, On the Invisible Diseases and their Causes*)¹ proposes to extend his new medicine beyond the male and the physical to the entire human being: male, female, physical, mental, spiritual. The work of 1531 may feature the first use of the German word *Geistkrankheit*² to refer to mental illness. Histories of psychiatry give him brief but honorable mention.³ And yet to claim *The Invisible Diseases* as a landmark of early modern psychiatry might be a tough sell. The concept of an invisible disease is as elusive as the treatise is ambiguous. An invisible disease is any malady that pertains to an invisible body or spirit, whereby the latter is as much ghost as it is mind. We find no systematic pathology, and indeed few examples, though epilepsy and religious hysteria are implicated. The *Geist[es]krankheiten* under discussion are not only few but scarcely recognizable as mental

1 Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493–1541), *De causis morborum invisibilium*, in *Essential Theoretical Writings*, ed. and trans. Andrew Weeks (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 720–937. References cited as ETW refer to this edition with the Huser 1589 source opposite the English. It will be cited also as H (Huser) by volume and page.

2 See note 1, Paracelsus, *De causis*, 734 (H 1:244). The context of the term “Geistkrankheiten” concerns how the body harms that which is eternal, i.e., the soul: “so folgen hernach dieselbigen krankheiten in seinen Versalen / wie dieselbigen Geistkrankheiten mögen bei uns sein: welcher Geist doch sichtbar ist bey seinem liecht / dann er ist der halbe Mensch” (734; H 1:244).

3 See Franz Gabriel Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *A Short History of Psychiatry*, 2nd, revised edition, trans. Sula Wolff (New York: Hafner, 1968); and Gregory Zilboorg in collaboration with George W. Henry, *A History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1941). To these historians, progress means overcoming a “medieval” view of mental illness as spirit possession or witchcraft. Ackerknecht, a professor of medical history at the University of Zurich, is most inclined to give accolades to Paracelsus, though not on account of *The Invisible Diseases*. The kindred fragmentary work *Von den Krankheiten, die der Verunft berauben* is credited with an essentially rational understanding of mania and St. Vitus dance (23–24). Alexander and Selesnick, whose account is replete with errors, charge Paracelsus with “mysticism” and “obscurantism”; but they consider him a courageous pioneer who broke with the supernaturalism of witch persecution (86). See also H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville, VA, and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 13–14.

illnesses today, since they include any ailment imparted to or incurred by an “invisible body.” Paracelsus’s title suggests an expansion of medical pathology; but the treatise is concerned with the relation of the material and spiritual realms, with matters that strike us as magical or metaphysical rather than medical or psychiatric. This is a work that appears to call for reform while remaining tethered to the past, for specialized pathology while blurring distinctions between mental illness, religious fervor, and the actions of invisible bodies or spirits.⁴

Yet despite the anomalies or perhaps because of them, Paracelsus’s *Invisible Diseases* casts a fresh light on the scope and depth of reform in the era of the Renaissance and Reformation. By definition, the latter is associated with ecclesiastical and doctrinal reform, devotion, and, sustaining them all, the Bible. By the same token, whatever has to do with science, medicine, nature, or humanity can be conveniently assigned to the alter ego of the sixteenth century, the Renaissance. To conform to full expectations, expressions of the Renaissance should be infused with the spirit of humanism, syncretism, and Neoplatonism; or they might relate to natural observation. Manifestations of the Reformation are the province of historians of religion and often of historians affiliated with Protestant churches. The writings of Paracelsus and some of those influenced by him fall between disciplinary lines by combining minor elements of Neoplatonism with an approach to nature and medicine which is biblically or doctrinally conditioned.

Throughout the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century (and in some quarters even today), the Bible has been considered a rich and reliable source of scientific knowledge concerning nature, the origin and structure of the cosmos, the nature of the human being, and the history of the world. When the Protestant Reformation transformed the basic understanding of religion and the Bible, it therefore had an inevitable impact on many objects of knowledge. When the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* diminished the authority of Aristotle and philosophy, this did not result in a modern understanding of the cosmos, nor in indifference to nature. It led instead to assertions of a knowledge that rejected Aristotle and deferred to religious authority. The result was a tendency and tradition of writ-

⁴ Certainly, however, Paracelsus was not unusual in treating religious fervor as a mental affliction or in diagnosing mental illnesses which are no longer recognizable as such. One need only compare the afflictions of “Enthusiasme” familiar to Meric Casaubon (1599–1671), or the once well-known malady of “Lycanthropy” (an imitation of dogs or wolves) discussed by Robert Bayfield (1630–1690), in *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535–1860*, ed. Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963), 143, 168. Credit is given to Paracelsus for his rational understanding of *Chorea lascivia*, the so-called dancing mania (168).

ings beginning with Paracelsus which I will refer to here as the “cosmic reformation.” These writings approach nature, human life, medicine, and society on the basis of religious premises. Paracelsus rejects the humanism at the core of Renaissance culture. As in the Middle Ages, Genesis is the key to the true origin and nature of creation. Christ is the exemplar of healing. Under the impact of the Reformation, ideas of nature partly medieval and partly innovative are aggressively asserted, even as the reformers are cleansing theology of scholastic and Aristotelian admixtures.

The resultant theories of nature conform neither to the received profile of the Renaissance nor to that of the Reformation. At their boldest, as we shall see, these theories envision a reformed or transfigured cosmos or “Golden World” in which the forces of nature are turned to human advantage and the pristine knowledge of Adam is restored. This optimism seems distinct from the worldly pessimism of the Reformation; but it is in fact grafted onto biblical notions. When Paracelsus alludes to the “the *anni Platonis* in which all things are renewed” (“*anni Platonis, in dem so sich Ernewern die ding all*”),⁵ this is indeed a classical allusion to the concept of *apokatastasis*, but it is one that could be assimilated into Christian thinking as approximating the apocalyptic notion of the “new heavens and new earth” in 2 Peter 3:13. Paracelsus’s echoes of Plato and references to philosophy are integrated into a presentation of nature which has biblical and medieval rather than Renaissance philosophical precedents.⁶

The split profile of the sixteenth century as Renaissance or Reformation places *The Invisible Diseases* and any similar writings into an unclassifiable limbo. In fact, this is a work that should be of interest to early modern and Reformation historians since it offers insight into the subjective world of the sixteenth century. How did the mentality of the Reformation view its own manifestations? How did it draw the line between the extraordinary and the ordinary? *The Invisible Diseases* offers a provocative interpretation of the extreme religious impulses of the Reformation as mental afflictions. When we talk about early modern madness, Foucault comes to mind. But when reading Paracelsus’s *Invisible Diseases* one thinks no less of Erik Erikson’s psychological study of the year 1958, *Young Man*

⁵ *Opus Paramirum*, ETW 338–39 (H 1:81).

⁶ See “Apokatastasis,” *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950); cf. *Philosophiae Liber II (De Elemento Ignis)*, H 8:67 (the kindred concept of “*Annus Ignis, vel Annus Stellatus*” is integrated into a philosophy of the elements that has biblical foundations drawn from Genesis). The depiction of the creation and the order of the cosmos in the *Timaeus* were considered auxiliary to the Christian understanding of nature during the Middle Ages.

Luther.⁷ Erikson's book generated consternation among Reformation historians by applying diagnostic concepts to the great reformer's religious impulses.⁸ In distant anticipation of Erikson, Paracelsus discusses faith in terms of pathological powers of suggestion and imagination. His intentions are not always clear, but his discussion of faith surely invokes a medical-diagnostic context. In this regard, his work recasts Reformation faith in unfamiliar colors. The concept of the "invisible disease" sheds light on the medical reformation of Paracelsus and the idiosyncratic mix of sacred and secular motives in his thought and that of his contemporaries.

Who was the author of this anomalous concept and work? Born Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim in 1493 or 1494 in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, he died in 1541 in Salzburg. In many ways, he embodies the tumult and controversy of his period. After studying medicine in Ferrara during the time of the Pomponazzi controversy over Aristotle's definition of the soul as mortal, he moved on to travel as a military surgeon throughout Europe. He seems to have regarded this as his journeyman years, boasting later of his travels and knowledge of the world.⁹ Though the precise nature of the experience he acquired is uncertain, his mental independence and rebellious temperament must have been bolstered by his peregrination. Settling down and fitting in proved difficult. During a first attempt to make Salzburg his residence during the years 1524–1525, he became embroiled in local hostilities between the ruling prince bishop and his plebeian subjects. He moved on to Strasbourg and in 1527 to Basel where he served as city physician and was appointed to lecture on medicine at the university. His radical teachings and irascible disposition resulted in another controversy and in his flight from Basel in early 1528. After finding no place to settle in several South German cities, he made his way to the Swiss Protestant town of St. Gall in 1530. He remained there for approximately two years, acting as the personal physician of a leading citizen and writing several of his most systematic works. He unsuccessfully courted the great humanist of St. Gall Joachim Vadianus (1484–1551).

An heroic failure in his lifetime, Paracelsus was a radical reformer in an age of reform and disturber of the peace in an embattled era and region. Casting doubt on all established teachings, he rejected the authority of Galen, Aristotle,

7 Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1958).

8 Roland H. Bainton, "Psychiatry and History: An Examination of Erikson's *Young Man Luther*," and Lewis W. Spitz, "Psychohistory and History: The Case of *Young Man Luther*," both in *Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of "Young Man Luther"*, ed. Roger A. Johnson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 19–56, 57–87.

9 Udo Benzenhöfer, *Paracelsus*. Rowohlts Monographien (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997), 31–34.

and Avicenna and proclaimed a bold theory and practice with implications for every sphere of life. From the very beginning of his recorded career as an author in Salzburg, he was also a religious reformer. His theological writings are more extensive than his medical ones and are only now being edited in full by Urs Leo Gantenbein. In his theology and metaphysics, Paracelsus was an anticlerical radical, a philosopher of nature, and a theorist of the supernatural. The religious context of his life and times is essential to his work; and the work casts a distinct light in turn on his times. A man of idiosyncratic beliefs, Paracelsus was fiercely critical of the major religious tendencies of his day.¹⁰ His lay theology overlaps with his medicine and psychology.

Despite many redundancies in the sprawling Paracelsian corpus, his *Invisible Diseases* is a unique concept and title found nowhere else in his writings. The work is the product of a singular moment. In late 1531, his temporary two-year stay in the Swiss town of Sankt Gallen (St. Gall) was approaching its conclusion. He had made vain overtures to Vadianus, the respected humanist, physician, Protestant reformer, and civic leader of St. Gall. He had produced a comprehensive series of works on medical theory. These works bore the distinctive titles of *Paragranum* and *Opus Paramirum* and were written in response to his critics in Basel. They were intended to give his medical reform the new disciplinary and institutional foundation required in order to answer his opponents. The last of the works, which did not quite reach completion, was *On the Invisible Diseases*.

On the Invisible Diseases was written at the climax of three simultaneous dramas: reformational, political, and authorial-biographical. The year 1531 was a highwater mark of the Reformation in Switzerland.¹¹ Several Swiss cities had made the reform their own. Zwingli had joined with reformers in southwest

10 Decisive for understanding the theologian Paracelsus is Urs Leo Gantenbein's *Neue Paracelsus-Edition* (NPE), of which volume one has appeared, *Theologische Werke 1 (Vita Beata–Vom seligen Leben)* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). On Paracelsus's anticlericalism and theological idiosyncrasy, Gantenbein writes: "Seine Kirchenkritik richtet sich zunächst gegen die Institutionen und Gebräuche der alten Kirche . . . , wobei der Papst als Irrlehrer erscheint und mit dem Antichristen identifiziert wird. In den späteren Jahren distanzierte sich Paracelsus allerdings auch von den Täufern und den anderen neuen Konfessionen und stellte, in Ablehnung eines institutionalisierten Priesteramts, Luther und Zwingli auf die gleiche Stufe mit dem Papsttum" ("His criticism of the church is directed first of all against the institutions and usages of the old church . . . ; whereby the pope appears as a false teacher who is identified with the Antichrist. In later years Paracelsus distanced himself from the Anabaptists and other new confessions and, in rejecting an institutionalized priesthood, placed Luther and Zwingli on the same level as the pope") (8).

11 Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) See also notes 44 and 47 below.

Germany to offer a common front against Luther's domination of Protestant doctrine. Zwingli, Luther, Rome, and the Holy Roman Empire had all condemned the Anabaptists who were suffering harsh persecution. St. Gall knew its share of scandals and persecutions of Anabaptists. Halley's Comet flared ominously in August 1531. Zwingli fell in battle on October 11 as the Catholic cantons pushed back against Protestant encroachment. The world was in acute crisis and Paracelsus invested a portion of his authority in its outcome. He published prognostications and cultivated Leo Jud, a Zurich reformer and colleague of Zwingli.¹² The Catholic resurgence and the death of Paracelsus's patient and patrician host undermined his position in St. Gall.¹³ He terminated his cycle of medical work, departed, and retrenched or redirected his efforts during his final restless decade. In 1531, a critical moment in a reformation jeopardized by sectarian passions coincided with intellectual and personal crises to darken the background of the work of that year.

As for Paracelsus's previous undertakings, we know that he had composed lay-theological and anticlerical polemics in the mid-1520s.¹⁴ We assume that his earliest medical writing was influenced by alchemy. We possess his lecture materials from his ten-month stint in 1527 and 1528 at the University of Basel, which ended in failure.¹⁵ Paracelsus authored medical works between 1528 and 1530 on syphilis, a disease of great public concern.¹⁶ He was infuriated both by his detractors in Basel and by the authorities in Nuremberg who blocked his publications on the advice of the Leipzig medical faculty. His so-called "*Para*-period" which is of interest here begins when he leaves Nuremberg in 1529 and encompasses his two-year stay in St. Gall.¹⁷ His writings during this interval begin with fierce

12 On his tract on the comet, see Paracelsus, *Der Komet im Hochgebirg von 1531*, ed. Urs Leo Gantenbein and Pia Holenstein Weidmann (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 2006).

13 On his sojourn in St. Gall, see Pirmin Meier, *Paracelsus: Arzt und Prophet, Annäherungen an Theophrastus von Hohenheim* (Zurich and Munich: Pendo, 1998).

14 Theophrast von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, division two (Abteilung zwei: Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften), vol. 3 (dogmatische und polemische Einzelschriften) ed. Kurt Goldammer (Wiesbaden and Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986), see *De septem punctis idolatriae christianae* (1–57) and *Liber de sancta trinitate* (233–73). This edition will subsequently be referred to as G by volume and page. On the chronological order of Paracelsus's writings, see Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 37–44.

15 Benzenhöfer, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 57–70. For the notes from his Basel lectures, see S 4 and 5.

16 See S 7:67–366.

17 See H 1 and 2, cited also as ETW.

verbal sallies against unforgiven enemies in Basel and Nuremberg.¹⁸ He declares war against a corrupt establishment and harangues a phantom student body which he still aspires to educate in his spirit. Paracelsus is a medical-theological Michael Kohlhaas whose work thunders with righteous fury.

There is a century-old tradition of the stylization of Paracelsus.¹⁹ In the *Paracelsus Trilogy* of Guido Erwin Kolbenheyer (1917–1925) or the 1943 film by G. W. Pabst,²⁰ his writings of this key period are heralded as the harvest of years of painstakingly accumulated experience and a font of wisdom that can be understood independently of his momentary situation. I recently translated and published the works of the years 1530–1531 alongside their sources from the 1589 Huser edition. They represent themselves as a furious counterassault against the detractors who haunt him. He vows to overthrow and replace a false and corrupt academic establishment with his own purified medical theory and practice.²¹ Paracelsus's work no more pursues disinterested science than the Reformation heralded enlightened tolerance. Neither is possible when absolute truth resides in sacred sources. For Paracelsus, there are divine saving powers in nature and Scripture. These saving powers have only to be cleansed of their adulteration with mercenary accretions. Medical theory has been sullied by the falsehoods of Aristotle, Galen, and Avicenna, medical practice degraded by the mercenary physicians who, like the venal clergy, place profit above the patients' well-being.²²

18 Scatological and redolent of the fury against idolatrous images inflaming Swiss Protestant cities, the *Vorred* or Preface to *Paragranum*, proceeds from denouncing his medical opponents as “kothauer vnd contrafeyt Ölgötzen” to declaring them the very impurities that will be burned off in his alchemical purification (ETW 72–79; cf. H 1:9–11).

19 The most elaborate attempt to give Paracelsus a canonical status within the history of science is the multivolume edition of selected documents pertaining to his early modern influence, the *Corpus Paracelsisticum: Dokumente frühneuzeitlicher Naturphilosophie in Deutschland*, vol. 1–4, ed. and commentary by Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle. *Frühe Neuzeit* 59 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001). Though these documents are exquisitely edited and well selected to lend maximum plausibility to the scientific impact of Paracelsus, they relegate a large body of disputed writings (assigned the peculiar status of “deutero-paracelsian”) to an indiscriminate limbo. If authentic, these works alter the meaning of Paracelsian “nature philosophy.” If inauthentic (and this is the tacit but undefended implication of the *deteuro* classification), they would have to stand at the forefront of an unbiased reception history.

20 Though completed in the mid–1920s, the spirit of the Nazi era suffuses Kolbenheyer's *Die Paracelsus Trilogy: 1. Die Kindheit des Paracelsus* (Munich: Georg Müller Verlag, 1917), 2. *Das Gestirn des Paracelsus* (Munich: Albert Langen/Goerg Müller, 1921), 3. *Das dritte Reich des Paracelsus* (Munich: Albert Langen/Georg Müller, 1925); *Paracelsus*, dir. Georg Wilhelm Pabst (written by Kurt Heuser, made in the studio of Bavaria Filmkunst, released on March 12, 1943).

21 See in particular Paracelsus's Preface to *Paragranum* in ETW 62–105 (H 2:5–21).

22 This is the charge set forth both in the *Paragranum* Preface and elsewhere.

The first great treatise of 1530, *Opus Paragranum*, launches the counteroffensive against his opponents. It proposes to supplant scholastic medicine with his four “pillars of medicine”: philosophy, astronomy, alchemy, and virtue or propriety. The title *Paragranum* recalls his trademark *Para-* prefix and evokes the symbol of the seed or *granum*, with its biblical, soteriological, and alchemical associations.²³

His next, the *Opus Paramirum*, had been anticipated by his anticlerical, lay-theological polemic of the mid 1520s, the *Liber de sancta trinitate*.²⁴ *Opus Paramirum* proclaims the alchemical triad of Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt as unified aspects of a universal process at the heart of nature.²⁵ The third treatise is entitled *De morborum utriusque professionis origine et causa*.²⁶ It is concerned not only with what he refers to as the “*tartarus* diseases,” which are functions of digestion and evacuation. His broader objective is to validate his new alchemical medicine. Alchemy is patently relevant to the digestive processes, which are nothing if not transformative. If nature is a metabolic process driven by divine invisible forces, all health and disease can be understood in terms of alchemical transformation.

After rejecting Avicenna and Aristotle, Paracelsus waxes even more expansive in 1531. He has anchored the well-being of the microcosm in the ordered processes of the natural macrocosm. Now he asserts that the human microcosm parallels the macrocosm *in statu nascendi*. Human birth parallels the cosmic creation as recounted in the first chapter of Genesis. He augments his theoretical framework with the gynecology in *De matrice (On the Matrix)*. It is focused on the birth-giving role of woman as “the smallest world.”²⁷ The trajectory of his argument veers at this juncture toward metaphysics. What in fact binds *On the Matrix* and the subsequent work *On the Invisible Diseases*²⁸ to the trajectory of his reforming vision is his claim to proceed from the visible to the invisible. This is a

²³ ETW 62–63, notes a and 1.

²⁴ See Paracelsus, *Liber de sancta trinitate*, see note 15; cf. Andrew Weeks, “Theorie und Mystik in der Nachfolge des Paracelsus,” *Morgen-Blatz: Yearbook Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 13 (2003): 290–92.

²⁵ ETW 300–01 (H 1:67).

²⁶ “On the Origin and Cause of the Diseases of Both [Medical] Professions” (i.e., those in the competence of the surgeon or the physician), is commonly referred to as the “Tartarus Treatise,” see ETW 506–615 (H 1:142–88).

²⁷ ETW 616–719 (H 1:189–237). His claim of originality and implication of founding gynecology must be weighed against the tradition of medieval books of “Women’s Secrets.” See *Women’s Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus’s De secretis mulierum with Commentaries*, ed. Helen Rodnite Lemay (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992).

²⁸ *De causis morborum invisibilium*, das ist, *Von den unsichtbaren Kranckheiten vnd ihren Vrsachen*, ETW 720–937.

procedure sanctioned by the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Athenians in Acts 17 to look beyond idols and material objects in this world and discern the invisible creator of the world, the invisible unknown God in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Romans 1:20 attests that, "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made."

The Paracelsian medical theory which is concerned with forces characterized by the author as divine argues from the visible to the invisible and vice versa. The divine influences are only partially articulated in alchemical and generative processes and cannot be grasped without the context of faith. His medicine favors the correspondence of visible and invisible realms. The relationship of these realms does not serve to refine concepts or secure evidence. It bolsters his authority. The imponderable powers of nature anchor his medicine, not in a nascent empirical science or observational psychology, but in the religious climate of the year 1531.

The *Preface and Argumentum* of his *On the Invisible Diseases* contends that the visible conditions of the human microcosm do not exhaust the subject matter of medicine. There is an *invisible half* of the human being with maladies of its own. The author pledges to forge ahead, from the visible to the invisible.²⁹ By the inverse path, God has made his incomprehensible wonders, his *magnalia*, manifest.³⁰ Paracelsus mentions the name of, and in so doing pays homage to, Dionysius the Areopagite,³¹ the pagan converted by Paul in Acts 17.

The treatise is divided into five books. The first of them treats "the diseases that result from faith" ("die krankheiten so vns der Glaube gibt").³² A second missing book treats the "impressions of the concealed heavens." A draft indicates that it concerned the Eucharistic controversy in which Paracelsus took part.³³ The third book treats the "diseases of the imagination," which are what we might call psychosomatic afflictions. The fourth, on "the natural powers that exert their effects contrary to the physical reason,"³⁴ and the fifth, which like the others treats "the invisible works,"³⁵ concern such diverse topics as magic characters and images. Natural magic, sorcery, faith, and miracle are woven throughout the exposition.

²⁹ ETW 722–23, "I will proceed onward into a realm that extends from the visible into the invisible" (cf. H 1:239).

³⁰ ETW 725 (H 1:240).

³¹ ETW 728–29 (H 1:242).

³² ETW 736 (H 1:245).

³³ ETW 794–95, notes a and 1.

³⁴ ETW 736 ("die da wider die leibliche vernunft wirckent"), 840–83 (H 1:289–306).

³⁵ ETW 884–937 (H 1:307–327).

After informing the reader that powers of faith are held even by the devils, but that “The devils have abused their faith,”³⁶ he arrives at his main point: “now I intend to come to another point, that of the abuse.”³⁷ Just as any other medication can be used to good or ill effect, the material power of faith can be used for either. By virtue of this real power, “Natural diseases are perverted into unnatural ones.”³⁸ This has two consequences. The first is that there is an effective faith-healing which does not result from a true Christian faith.³⁹ The second consequence is that from antiquity on, this evil healing power has lent credence to heathen or idolatrous sects and allowed healing and disease to be affected and sometimes magnified and rendered even more complex by ungodly systems of belief. In a sense, this means that any disease can potentially rank among the “invisible diseases.”

The peculiarity of the first book on diseases resulting from faith lies in the fact that Paracelsus recognizes the supernatural power of faith to move mountains (1 Cor. 13:2), while generalizing this power beyond Christianity itself. Though no other creed saves the soul, faith, whether true or false, empowers supernatural levers by means of which spirit acts on body and inner reality affects external reality. A false malevolent faith can act preternaturally at a distance to inflict illness on others. The supernatural potency of faith also imparts a power over disease and health to healing cults, ranging from ancient Apollo worship to the medieval cults of saints rumored to heal St. Valentine’s disease, epilepsy,⁴⁰ or St. Anthony’s fire, ergotism.⁴¹ Yet even the efficacy of the saints’ cults cannot justify placing faith in them. Only faith in Christ is true and good.

To understand this concept of faith, we need to bear in mind Paracelsus’s situation. Confessional storms were buffeting his surroundings. Because of these sectarian conflicts, doctrines forfeited any unchallenged claim to truth. Paracelsus concludes that the raging confessional storms are driven by *a power of faith divorced from truth*.

The Paracelsian diseases of faith and the imagination overlap with what we might call the powers of suggestion and mass hysteria in his discussion of St. Vitus’s Dance. “This disease has a strange origin . . . distinct from those others,” writes Paracelsus:

³⁶ ETW 745 (H 1:248).

³⁷ ETW 749 (H 1:250).

³⁸ ETW 753 (H 1:252).

³⁹ ETW 755 (H 1:253).

⁴⁰ ETW 773 (H 1:261).

⁴¹ ETW 777 (H 1:262).

Lady Troffea was the first one known for this disease. She adopted strange moods and manners; and when she came into a state of false pride and turned stubborn against her husband, when he told her to do something . . . she concocted a disease that would suit her purposes . . . [She] pretended that she could not stop dancing. For her husband disliked nothing more than dancing . . . she hopped and jumped high, sang and lulled, and did whatever her husband hated . . . other women did the same . . . the one showing the other how to do it. It came to the point that the public regarded this as a kind of penitence [it acquired a religious sense]; and this signification became a cause which propagated the disease.⁴²

Paracelsus makes no attempt to pinpoint the person of Frau Troffea or the emergence of St. Vitus's dance in her behavior. Her name derives from *troffieren*, according to Grimm, to flirt or run around, suggesting that she is an allegory of female obstinacy. The attribution of her malady to the power of faith should have resonated in St. Gall.⁴³ Anabaptist women in the city had usurped during recent years what Diarmaid MacCulloch's Reformation history refers to as a "shockingly prominent role in the local reform." In the case of the women, the events involved a sense of being in possession of divine powers lodged in the sexual and procreative potency:

St. Gallen women decided to cut their hair short because they said it provoked lustful thoughts in men and so was responsible for sin. No amount of pleading from Johann Kessler, a chief local spokesman for moderate reformation in the town, could persuade them that they had misunderstood what St. Paul had told the Corinthians about women and their hair. Magdalene Müller applied the words of Christ in St. John's Gospel, "the way, the truth and the life," to herself, while one of her companions, Frena Bumenin, a servant girl from Appenzell, so identified herself with God that she proclaimed herself the New Messiah and gathered disciples. Bumenin's excitement turned to self-destructive delusion, and she became convinced that she was going to bear the Antichrist. . . . some women repented . . . but a new horror emerged when the women ostentatiously began offering themselves sexually to the men in their devotional circle. "Why do you judge?" they replied to the appalled rebukes of the townfolks. "We have passed through death. What we now do is against our will in the spirit."⁴⁴

These were only the most sensational of all the many forms of mad behaviors recorded by the St. Gall saddler Johannes Keßler in his *Sabata* or "idle moments."⁴⁵

⁴² ETW 779 (H 1:263).

⁴³ ETW 778 (H 1:263).

⁴⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Viking, 2003), 163–64; see also *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*. Part 2: *Ostschweiz*, unter Benutzung der von Leonhard von Muralt begonnenen Materialsammlung, ed. Heinold Fast (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1973–1974). Subsequent references are to *Quellen* by volume and page.

⁴⁵ See note 44, *Quellen* 2, 590–638.

Other events involved fits of trembling that surely must have resembled epileptic seizures, as well as mad infantile behaviors intended to fulfill Jesus's admonition to "become like children" (Matt. 18:3).⁴⁶ Paracelsus does not mention any particular episodes, though he must have heard about them from the townspeople among whom he resided. In implicit agreement with Johannes Keßler or Joachim Vadianus, he condemns self-induced extravagance and willfully incurred martyrdom.⁴⁷ Most unkindly of all, he characterizes the Anabaptists' repetition of the baptismal sacrament as an *incantatio*, a technique used in ceremonial magic.⁴⁸ The common denominator of magic, psychosomatically induced illness, mass hysteria, and the powers of suggestion and of a faith vested in the sacraments lies for Paracelsus in the action of invisible powers upon the visible realm.

The fourth book, *On the Invisible Diseases*, takes up the commonly accredited imprinting of an image in the mind of a pregnant woman on the body of her embryo. Montaigne was no less certain that this could happen.⁴⁹ The generative potency of pregnancy magnifies this action, according to Paracelsus, to the point of exacerbating plague epidemics.⁵⁰ The occult powers of faith shade off on one side into the natural magic of images or characters and, on the other, into teeming underworlds of the supernatural.

The Invisible Diseases is not a manual of psychiatric diagnoses. Few are discussed and their classification is overshadowed by the rudimentary dichotomy of the visible and the invisible. The work asserts that the physical can only be

46 *Quellen* 2, 615 ("Der [Goldschmid] hielt inen, den widertouften, für, hin und her in den dörfer und besunder in Abbaceller landschaft, den spruch Christi: es sye dann, ir werdend wie die kinder, besitzend ir nit das rich der himel [Mat 18:3]. . .sy sollent sich Kindeschen stellen und berden"—"The [goldsmith] attributed to the Anabaptists at times, especially in Appenzeller region, the saying of Christ: 'unless you become like the children, you will not possess the kingdom of heaven,' so that they were required to behave and act childishly"); 618–22 (the behavior of Margarita Hattinger, Magdalena Müller, and Frena Bumenin).

47 *Quellen* 2, 639. Joachim Vadianus gives a moving account of the embrace of martyrdom by the four Anabaptists of St. Gall publicly executed in May, 1530, when Paracelsus was already in the city; he closes with the pitiless moral that "sterben und verachtung des lebens nit mag ain gwiß bezügnuss sin der warheit, wie unser toufer uns vor klain und großen räten oft entgegenwurfend" ("dying and holding life in contempt might not be a witnessing of truth, as our Anabaptists respond to us before magistrates high and low")—a position embraced at the time by our author, ETW 262–63, 786–87.

48 ETW 785 (H 1:266).

49 ETW 682–83 (H 1:221); cf. "Of the force of imagination," in Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, *The Essays*, trans. Charles Cotton, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt. Great Books of the Western World, 25 (Chicago, London, and Toronto: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 41 ("we experimentally see that women impart the marks of their fancy to the children they carry in the womb").

50 ETW 820, note b.

understood in reference to the spiritual. It reclaims the healing example of Jesus. We should not forget the prevalence of spirit possession and exorcisms performed by Jesus in the Gospels.⁵¹ Jesus's power over the spirit realm evokes the sovereign rule of God over all of nature, as well as the extension of Christian healing to psychiatry. However, this same power accommodates dark realms of the supernatural, both in the Gospels and in the worldview of Paracelsus. Faith and imagination are coupled. Their shared occult action is performed by an "invisible body" that compliments the visible one. The *Volumen Paramirum* of this period, or possibly somewhat earlier, reads as if his surroundings were a battleground of invisible warring spirits, embodying all the "envy, hatred, and anger" people bear against one another.⁵² The rival spirits at war within the human world included the power of religious faith or the destructive force of faith-conditioned hatred. As an account of mental illness, this might sound like a paranoid schizophrenic fantasy of the patient rather than a diagnosis of the physician. But the spectral war of spirits is not as fanciful as it seems: it sublimates the persecutions, conflicts, and vilifications playing out in 1531. These are echoed in the resounding title of a somewhat later compendium of the Reformation century: *Theatrum Diabolorum*.⁵³

Much suggests that sixteenth-century believers occupied a mental, spiritual, and emotional world unlike ours. Reformation historians are willing to acknowledge the destructive irrationality of Luther's virulent anti-Jewish polemics. But the question is whether these vituperations differ from the indistinguishable fury, typical for that age, fueled by the reformers' intolerance of other believers and non-believers? Were Luther's anti-Jewish rages rooted in peripheral fears of divine wrath or in the central Reformation concern with salvation by faith alone?⁵⁴ If the

51 Cf. ETW 733 (H 1:243), note 2 (P. vaguely recalls such episodes as Mt 8:16 or Jesus's instructions in Mt 10:1).

52 *Volumen medicinæ Paramirum Theophrasti*, in H 1:50. In Sudhoff's edition: *Bruchstücke des Buches Von den fünf Entien genannt "Volumen medicinae Paramirum de medica industria" (Paramirum primum)*, in Paracelsus, *Werke*, Abt. 1, vol. 1, 218.

53 *Theatrum Diabolorum*, *Das ist: Warhafft, eigentliche vnd kurtze Beschreibung/ Allerley geweltlicher/ schrecklicher vnd abschewlicher Laster/ so in diesen letzten / schweren vnd bösen Zeiten / an allen orten vnd enden fast bräuchlich / auch grausamlich im schwang gehen / Darauf ein jeder frommer Christ sonderlich zusehen vnd fleissig zu lernen / wie daß wir in disem elenden vnd mühseligen Leben / nit mit Keysern / Königen / Fürsten vnd Herrn / oder anderen hohen gewaltigen Potentaten / sondern mit dem aller mächtigsten vnd stärcksten Fürsten dieser Welt / dem Teufel / zu kämpfen und zustreiten* etc. (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Schmid, 1575).

54 Of relevance here is Mark U. Edwards, Jr.'s *Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1536–46* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 142. Edwards writes of Heiko A. Oberman's analysis of Luther's anti-Jewish treatises: "His attacks on Jews, Oberman rightly in-

latter is the case, how can psychopathic hatred and the paranoid perception of omnipresent diabolical enemies be denied the status which Paracelsus characterizes as a “disease of faith”? What grounds do we have for rejecting out of hand an interpretation of the sixteenth-century age of faith as, at least in part, an age of mass psychosis?

We mentioned the controversy over Erikson’s *Young Luther*. In rejecting its psychological analysis of the reformer, Roland Bainton and Lewis Spitz charged Erikson with anachronism. Against Erikson’s book, they argued that the depressions and rages of Luther were religious rather than pathological. As a man of his time, Paracelsus’s association of faith with pathology militates against the accusation of anachronism, as does much else besides.⁵⁵ In looking back at the distant past, it is perhaps tempting to react stereotypically to reports of mystical or supernatural phenomena in medieval or early modern times. A half century ago, mystical ecstasies and visionaries were subject to psychoanalytic reductionism. Nuns were regarded ipso facto as victims of repression. A quarter century later, the same nuns and female mystics were on the verge of becoming stereotypical representatives of a medieval “women’s movement.”⁵⁶ Similarly, Pentecostals and Evangelicals have undergone a transformation from erstwhile figures of ridicule to representatives of a popular spirituality which no one may or could call abnormal without violating the spirit of tolerance and multiculturalism. The same cultural sea change that upgraded the status of ecstasies and nuns is responsible for the transformed stereotype of present-day charismatics, whose image has been ameliorated recently by the psychologist and anthropologist T. M. Luhrmann.⁵⁷ Acceptance or censure is apportioned to the group or type rather than the individual.

sists, cannot be understood properly apart from this apocalyptic context. . . . But we cannot have it both ways. If the anti-Jewish treatises cannot be divorced from their context without serious distortion, then the same should be true for his other writings. It is not intellectually honest to pick and choose.”

⁵⁵ In fact, this association was not uncommon. See note 47, Vadianus as cited in *Quellen* 2, or Montaigne’s equation of voluntary martyrdom with madness in “Of drunkenness,” *Essays*, 166, as well as in the above cited documents on the history of psychiatry in note 4 (Casaubon on religious Enthusiasm).

⁵⁶ The recognition of this problem and an attempted correction are submitted by Peter Dinzelsbacher, *Mittelalterliche Frauenmystik* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zurich: Schöningh, 1993), 27, see also note 1.

⁵⁷ Tanya M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

Against these continental shifts in stereotype, common sense suggests that we need a range of evaluative possibilities, not excluding the pathological or the pretended. The medievals themselves were open to variety in the representation of religious behavior, as one readily notices in *The Decameron* of Giovanni Boccaccio (ca. 1450). In remaining open to the possibility that religious conformists or outsiders of earlier times may have been, even by the standards of their own time, mentally ill, we come up against the limits of our information, but we do not commit an anachronism. Why should we insist on a single approach to religious behavior in the past? Extraordinary behavior might embody an individualism of considered spiritual purposes or it might signal pathological compulsions. Even in the sixteenth century, religious fervors, ecstasies, depressions, and rages could appear to observers as pathological. This is worth remembering with the approach of the Reformation quincentenary. Otherwise those devoted to the commemoration of Luther and the transformation he launched will find themselves unwittingly memorializing and sanctifying the vicious and the deranged along with the sublime.

The unclassifiable ambiguity of Paracelsus's *Invisible Diseases* results in some measure from our skewed way of approaching the sixteenth century. Disciplinary dichotomies encourage us to contrast the biblically oriented Reformation with the humanistically oriented Renaissance, the former concerned with the spiritual, the latter with the worldly or natural. The dichotomy ignores the universal assumption of that age that the key to all knowledge lay in literary sources including the Bible, a valid source to nearly all the learned of the time. In so doing, we overlook the likelihood that advances in biblical studies and doctrinal reform provided stimulus for other areas of renovation, not excluding medicine. Writing in the conclusion of his *Letter to the German Nobility* (1520), Luther understood it as self-evident that his reform of theology should be accompanied by equally thorough reforms in law and medicine. His *Genesis* commentaries leave no doubt that the biblical account of human and cosmic creation is a valid source of natural history. Luther resoundingly rejected the philosophy of Aristotle, which had been a solid redoubt of natural science throughout the later Middle Ages. The universality of reforming intentions and the validity of the Bible as a font of natural knowledge meant that religious reform was capable of inspiring a reformation in the understanding of human life and the cosmos. Paracelsus' treatise on *Invisible Diseases* fails as a medical or psychiatric work precisely because its effort is redirected from the mental illness toward a contemplation of the timeless relations of the visible to the spiritual. It straddles the boundaries commonly assumed to distinguish the Renaissance from the Reformation.

In anticipation of the Reformation quincentenary, I am editing and translating the writings⁵⁸ of what can be called the cosmic Reformation: German religious dissenting writings on society and religion, medicine, nature, and metaphysics. Because these works have been relegated to the questionable categories of theosophy, mysticism, and esotericism, they tend to be overlooked as mere fringe phenomena in intellectual history. They constitute a tradition in their own right. It was inaugurated by the Paracelsus who wrote anticlerical lay theology and polemic in 1524–1525, during events associated with the radical reformation and Peasant Wars. His *Liber de Sancta Trinitate* of 1524 offers a naturalistic conception of the Trinity with a female aspect of the deity (a “himblische künigin” or celestial queen). There are two “lights” of knowledge, one human, the other spiritual. Since both derive from God, natural knowledge has religious authorization.⁵⁹ A century later, Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), in his defense against the Lutheran pastor who had condemned his work, maintained in keeping with the precursor of 1524, that the principles of all nature are triune, corresponding to the Trinity. True religious inspiration therefore encompasses the divine forces in nature.⁶⁰

Not only knowledge but the transformation of nature is proclaimed by the cosmic reformation: Paracelsus’s *Von den natürlichen Dingen* seeks the healing and transforming powers hidden in the uncompounded *simplicia* of alchemical art, much as the reformers sought the core truth hidden beneath the scholastic accretions and distortions of Scripture. This medical writing assails the “drunken philosopher Aristotle” (“der Blaw *Philosophus Aristoteles*”) for excluding the pos-

58 The writings that have been published or are planned to appear are as follows by year of origin: 1524, Paracelsus, *De septem punctis idolatriae christianae* (2016); 1524, *De Sancta Trinitate* (2016); 1530, *Opus Paragranum* (2007); 1530, *Opus Paramirum* (2007); 1531, *De causa et origine morborum* (2007); 1531, *De matrice* (2007); 1531, *De morborum invisibilium* (2007); 1534, Sebastian Franck, *Daß Gott das einig ein und höchstes Gut* (2016); 1574, Valentin Weigel, *Sermo de bono semine et zizania* (2003); 1576, *Vom Ort der Welt* (2003); 1578, *Der güldene Griff* (2003); 1612, Jacob Böhme, *Aurora or Morgen Röte im auffgang* (2013); 1618, Johann Staricius, *Libellus Disputatorius* (2016); 1620, Böhme, *Gründlicher Bericht vom irdischen und himmlischen Mysterio* (2013); and 1618, *Schutz-Rede wider Gregor Richter* (2016). Ten of these writings are available as of 2013. The three by Weigel appeared in Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings*. The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. and intro. Andrew Weeks (New York and Mahway NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), the works by Paracelsus of the years 1530–1531 appeared in ETW. *Aurora* and *Gründlicher Bericht* are in production at Brill at the time of this writing.

59 G 3 246–47, 259.

60 Jacob Böhme, *Apologia oder Schutz-Rede wider Gregorium Richter*, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 5, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (reprint of the 1730 edition) (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag-Günther Holzboog, 1960), 366 (on “die 3 Principia in der Natur”).

sibility of alchemical transmutation. The coming “age of the arts of Elias (“die zeit der Künst *Helias*”)⁶¹ holds out the prospect of a “Golden World” (“die Guldin Welt”). Paracelsus’s characterization of the new state of things contrasts Christ with the “*Theologi*,” who care nothing for the poor but only for material advantages (“Pfründen”).⁶² The optimism of the anticipated “Golden World” promises to qualify Paracelsus as a Renaissance visionary, but little evidence to this effect is found in his writings disdainful of humanism (which, perhaps in part for that reason, have been largely ignored in favor of documents with the desired tendency written by later adherents in order to promote his published works, and themselves as its disseminators). Paracelsus’s diatribe contrasting Christ with the venal theologians redirects the anticlerical and antiauthoritarian impulses of the reform of doctrine and the church by extending its revolutionary thrust to nature and holding out the promise of improved conditions to attain completion in an eschatologically renewed natural cosmos.

In *The Invisible Diseases*, the visible and the invisible, nature and spirit, psychiatry and the crisis of the early Reformation, come together. Thematic threads pass from this pivotal work to the concern with magic in the final decade of Paracelsus. Both his undisputed writings and those attributed to him without conclusive evidence have been ignored by the guardians of his memory who burnish the image of a Renaissance hero instead of engaging with his writings. The drift of the cosmic reformation resides in a question which must have been as obvious then as it is easy to disregard now. If the authority of the Church and its reading of Holy Scripture have been cast aside, how could the understanding of human life and the cosmos derived from Scripture remain unaffected?

Unlike the doctrinal innovations of the reformers, the theories of nature they helped inspire have no place within our academic organization of knowledge. Unassimilated, they are a potential source of embarrassment to the scholars of doctrinal history. Regardless of sensitivities, we need to consider the historical and literary consequences of the questions posed by such writings without separating the fruits of the Reformation from the remote climate of belief in which they ripened. It would be misguided to attempt to save Reformation tradition and Protestant theology from the taint of historical relativism. An orchestra sounds false if its brass, wood, or stringed sections are silenced or any single instrument excluded. The discordant orchestra of the Reformation should sound different and perhaps fuller and more real when these authors and their neglected writings have their voices restored and made audible.

61 H 7:198.

62 ETW 338–39.

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Paracelsus on Mental Health

The man who styled himself Paracelsus (1483–1541) lived a turbulent life in turbulent times. Vastly ambitious, he professed a new therapeutic that was at once Christian and Germanic. Developed in dozens of treatises that cover fourteen stout volumes in the standard edition of his medical and philosophical works,¹ it was specifically Christian because based on a view of Man and Nature that he found in the Bible and preached in lay sermons.² In this view, God created diseases and remedies as part of Nature, the diseases had natural causes, and the cures were revealed to Man over time. By the end of time, which Paracelsus thought was fast approaching, all cures would be known, and they would be natural ones. The good physician only appeared to work wonders.

Paracelsian medicine was fundamentally Germanic, meanwhile, it drew less on the ancient Greek and Roman physicians and more on the folklore and artisanal knowledge which he encountered among his patients. He considered medicine an art like that of other craftsmen and thought medical knowledge should be shared with anyone who cared for the health of others, including herb gatherers and wise women. He called himself “doctor of both medicines” (*utriusque Medicinae Doctor* in Latin, *beyder Artzney Doctor* in the New High German that he much preferred): a surgeon and physician attending to the body on and beneath the surface, respectively, at a time when the “barber surgeon” had a much lower social rank than the academic physician. He broke with tradition by writing and lecturing in German at a time when Latin was the *lingua franca* of medicine throughout Europe. One scholar remarks that he put up with the awkwardness (*Ungeschicktheit*) of his German sentences because he had the firm conviction that God was the great physician and that God’s Spirit, the “holy teacher” (*Heilige[r] Lehrer*), taught him what he wrote.³

¹ Karl Sudhoff, ed., *Paracelsus, Sämtliche Werke*, part 1: *Medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften*, 14 vols. (Munich: Barth; Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1922–1933). Unless otherwise indicated, German quotations from Paracelsus are taken from this edition. The old-spelling text is based on the collected edition prepared by Johannes Huser: *Paracelsus, Bücher und Schriften*, 10 vols. (Basel: Konrad Waldkirch, 1589–1591), supplemented 1605 and 1618; however, Sudhoff has tried to systematize accidentals of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

² The words “man” and “nature” are capitalized here and elsewhere to indicate personification. Nature, for Paracelsus, was the living Macrocosm, or Great World, and Man was her child.

³ Roland Edighoffer, ed., Johann Valentin Andreae, *Rosenkreuzerschriften* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 30; citing Gisela von Boehm-Bezing, *Stil und Syntax bei Paracelsus* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1966), 10.

The new medicine of Paracelsus was at once pragmatic, making use of whatever worked, and theoretical, placing old and new therapies in a new model of disease. Traditional Galenic medicine taught that diseases originated in the imbalance of bodily fluids, known as humors. Paracelsus thought they came from outside the body, from poisons in the environment. He was among the first to study miner's lung. He introduced the treatment of syphilis with mercury, which remained the standard until the development of antibiotics. He thought that physicians should travel because diseases like syphilis also travel. Even the planets and stars were part of his cosmic environment; they could shed their influence in the form of influenza and other diseases.

At the same time, Paracelsus resisted the popular notion that most sickness, and especially mental illness, was inflicted by the Devil to tempt people or by God to punish them. At a time when mental illness was defined largely in theological and legal terms, he tried to show that many diseases affecting the reason had quite natural origins. It was no easy task. As a leading medical historian has remarked, he tried to understand and treat madness in "a world gone mad."⁴ Moreover, the basic facts of his biography raise the suggestion that he may have suffered from mental problems himself. A recent biographer writes: "When we consider the awkwardness of his relations with other people, the blind rages, the recurrent self-inflicted casualties, the inability to settle down, the periods of manic activity, the apocalyptic visions—all may make us suspect something like a manic-depressive disorder."⁵

What we can know is that Paracelsus was remarkably sympathetic to the plight of those who suffered from what he called "diseases that steal the reason."⁶ Like others before him, he showed special sensitivity to the melancholy commonly associated with the sedentary, hard-working scholar, but he also wrote about mania, superstition, and enchantment as well as poisoning by food or drink or sex, including what would now be called addiction. He wrote with the eye of a physician and the experience of one who has prepared and administered a variety of medications. He wrote about the symptoms and causes of mental illness as well as the treatment. There are some notable inconsistencies over

4 H. C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 80. For a larger account of madness from antiquity through the sixteenth century, see the contribution of Thomas G. Benedek in this volume.

5 Philip Ball, *The Devil's Doctor: Paracelsus and the World of Renaissance Magic and Science* (London: Heinemann; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 298.

6 Paracelsus, "Das siebente Buch in der Arznei von den Krankheiten, Von den Krankheiten, die der Vernunft berauben," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 393–455.

the years,⁷ primarily in the etiology and underlying theory, but also the attempt to arrive at a comprehensive view of human beings as creatures whose bodies, spirits, and souls put them “a little lower than the angels.”⁸

This essay will review what Paracelsus wrote about mental illness at several points in his career, noting changes in his thinking and suggesting possible reasons for them. It will suggest how his understanding of mental illness connects to his overall anthropology, or theory of mankind, and to his theological and philosophical ideas. It will consider his contributions to both psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy. Finally, it will take up the biographer’s question of his own mental state.

I The God-Speaker

He was born Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, at Sihlbrücke near the Swiss town of Einsiedeln, where the abbey church with its black Madonna was a popular stop point on the medieval pilgrimage route known as Jacob’s Way (*Jakobsweg*). He came into the world in the last weeks of 1493, at the time when Columbus was in Puerto Rico on his second voyage of discovery, and thus at the start of new era in world history. He was the only child of a couple who worked at the pilgrims’ hostel south of town, his father as the resident physician, his mother as a chambermaid. His mother drowned in the Sihl river before he turned ten, a possible suicide. After that, his father traveled east with the lad, becoming the physician of Villach in the Austrian Tyrol. Wilhelm von Hohenheim was the illegitimate offspring of a member of the Bombasts of Hohenheim, now a part of Stuttgart, and gave the family name to his son along with an obvious pride in both the nobility and the peasantry from which he came, and his son after him. It is possible that the son chose to publish under a classical rendering of Hohenheim (German ‘high house’ or ‘noble house’) as *para* (Greek ‘above’ or ‘beyond’) and *celsus* (Latin ‘elevated’ or ‘noble’ as in the ecclesiastical word *excelsus*).⁹

From his father, a licensed physician but not a university graduate, Paracelsus learned the work of healing and medicating. He is said to have studied

⁷ See Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (Basel: S. Karger, 1982), 150–52.

⁸ Psalms 8:5. Bible quotations in English follow the King James Version (1611).

⁹ Charles Webster, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time* (New Haven, NJ, and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 39–43, reviews the appearance of the name in ca. 1529 and casts doubt on the popular etymology “beyond Celsus” (the Roman medical encyclopedist).

medicine in Basel, Ferrara, and Vienna, although there is no record that he graduated from any of them. By 1517 he was treating patients, and by the early 1520s he was recording his medical discoveries and opinions in what became a habitual cycle of work, sleep, and writing or dictation. He never married and had no known children other than the medical disciples he called “ours” (*unsern*). He traveled restlessly throughout the German-speaking world and beyond it to Russia in the east; Spain, Portugal, and France in the west; Poland in the north; and perhaps to Mediterranean destinations in the far south and east. His attempts to settle in one place or another—in Basel, Straßburg, St. Gall, Salzburg, or even Villach—rarely lasted more than a few months and usually left him bitterly disappointed. In addition to his medical books, he wrote prophecies, sermons, and religious tracts.¹⁰ He did some of his most speculative and far-reaching work in the last years of his life. He died just before his forty-eighth birthday, and though stories circulated that he died from an overdose of elixir or drank wine that his enemies poisoned,¹¹ he was probably just worn out after a life of nearly constant travel, often by foot. His whole story is full of grandiose claims and sharp diatribes appropriate to the name Bombastus, though only related to the English word ‘bombast’ in folk etymology.¹² But the etymology of his given name is a better indication. Theophrastus means literally God-speaker (from Greek *theo* ‘god’ and *phrastus* ‘speech’), that is to say, prophet. His father may conceivably have named him after the Greek philosopher Theophrastus of Eresus, a naturalist and protégé of Aristotle. But his followers thought of him as the prophet of a new blend of religion and learning, sometimes called Theophrastia Sancta.¹³ They called themselves “brothers in Christ first, then in Theophrastus” (*in Christo primum, tandem in Theophrasto, fratres*).¹⁴ At least one recent biographer has described him as a prophet.¹⁵

10 Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, part 2: *Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften*, 7 vols., ed. Wilhelm Matthiessen and Kurt Goldammer (Munich: Barth; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1923–1965).

11 Ball, *The Devil's Disciple* (see note 5), 338.

12 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), “bombast,” noun 3. Hereafter abbreviated *OED*.

13 Carlos Gilly, “*Theophrastia Sancta*: Paracelsianism as a Religion in Conflict with the Established Churches,” *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation, His Ideas and Their Transformation*, ed. Ole Grill (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1998), 151–85.

14 Gerard Dorn, “*Artis Chemicæ*,” *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. 1 (1602; Straßburg: Zetzner, 1659), 192–276; here 194. Dorn was the principal translator of Paracelsian texts into Latin. See Thomas Willard, “The Star in Man: C. G. Jung and Marie–Louise von Franz on the Alchemical Philosophy of Gerard Dorn,” *Gutes Leben und Guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien*, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 425–61.

15 Pirmin Meier, *Paracelsus: Arzt und Prophet: Ahnährungen an Theophrastus von Hohenheim* (1993; Zurich and Munich: Pendo, 1998).

The writings on mental illness fall into three periods of a relatively short career. Karl Sudhoff, who edited the still-standard edition of the medical texts of Paracelsus, dated the book on diseases that rob the reason to 1525–1526, which he termed the years of the author's most intense, uninterrupted intellectual activity.¹⁶ Of all the author's books on mental illness, this one is the most systematic, accounting for the varieties of such afflictions with their causes and treatments. He refined his thought over the years and discussed aspects of madness in many other texts. However, his most sustained comments occur in work on "invisible diseases" and astrological medicine, which Sudhoff dated to the years 1531–1535 and 1537–1538, respectively. These texts, along with associated fragments, were written after the tumultuous year that Paracelsus spent as city physician of Basel, in 1527–1528. They show greater skepticism about the power of medicine to heal all ills, and greater conviction that medicine and theology are intimately linked, that some diseases will only have cures when God so wills.

Although his thinking evolved time and was never entirely consistent, it is still possible to generalize about the Paracelsian perspective on mental illness. Whatever his mood swings, he never underwent a fundamental change of heart. He always worked by what he called light of God and the light of Nature. However, to understand how he arrived at his basic thinking about madness, it is necessary to see how it modified the dominant models, first of all by substituting the wisdom of the biblical Magi for what he considered the misguided and overly valued teachings of the pre-Christian West.

II The Black Humor

Paracelsus was the third Germanic writer to think seriously about magic during the sixteenth century. The first was Trithemius, Abbot of Sponheim (1462–1516), who devised a secret communication that he called steganography.¹⁷ The second was Henricus Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535), by training a lawyer and the author of three books "Of occult philosophy,"¹⁸ composed in 1510 and dedicated to Trithemius, with whom he had studied.¹⁹ Paracelsus was long thought

¹⁶ Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, v.

¹⁷ See Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

¹⁸ See Christopher I. Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels: Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 119 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

¹⁹ Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri III* (1531; Leiden: Godefrid and Marcel Beringos, 1550), a3r–a4r.

to have met Trithemius, for he mentions an abbot of Sponheim. He clearly shared many ideas of Agrippa, even if he did not read the *De Occulta Philosophia* after it was published in 1531. Indeed, he is said to have written his own book of that title, though the attribution has also been called spurious.²⁰ Over and again he proclaimed true magic as the key to both science and prophecy.

Agrippa's three books dealt with the three worlds: the earthly or elemental, the celestial or heavenly, and the supercelestial or divine. The first book, on the elemental world that humans inhabit, had a chapter on madness. Agrippa noted that Aristotle associated melancholy (from Greek *melan* 'black' and *khole* 'bile') with the ill temper characterized by excess of this cold and dry humor. This humor, he wrote, "is so obstinate, and terrible a thing, that the violence of it is said, by Physicians, and Naturall Phylosophers, beside madness [*furor*], which it doth induce, also to entice evill spirits to seize upon mens bodies."²¹ In better integrated people, however, it sometimes "stirs up a madness conducing to knowledge, and divination, especially if it be helped by any Celestiall influx, especially of *Saturn*." Men of a "saturnine" temperament, typically dark and gloomy men, tend to overlook the affairs of their contemporaries and look to the stars. Their thoughts ascend, said Agrippa, according to the nature of their mind, if aided by "spirits" (*daemones*). They rise "according to a threefold apprehension of the soul, viz. imaginative, rationall, and mentall" (*imaginativam, rationalem & mentalem*).²² If the soul is imaginative, the person may become a painter or architect or master of another manual art. If it is rational, he may become a philosopher, physician, or poet. And if it is mental, he may learn "the secrets of divine things, as the Law of God, and the orders of Angels, and such things as belong to the knowledge of things eternall and salvation of souls."²³

Agrippa's tripartite soul is comparable to the Scholastic soul of medieval psychology: the imaginative to the natural soul (*anima naturalis*, common to

²⁰ Paracelsus, "De Occulta Philosophia," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14, 513–42.

²¹ Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy, or of Magick*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Gregory Moule, 1650), 132–35; here 133; book 1, chapter 60; compare *De Occulta Philosophia* (see note 19), 137–40.

²² Agrippa, *The Books of Occult Philosophy* (see note 21), 134; *De Occulta Philosophia* (see note 19), 138.

²³ Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (see note 21), 134. Agrippa cites Aristotle's *Problemata*. For the saturnine person, see Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963), 102–08; the authors note that it was Marsilio Ficino, in *De Triplici Vita* (Venice: Aldus, 1498), who (in lib. 1, cap. 5) revived Aristotle's suggestion in *Problemata* 953b that all geniuses were probably melancholic.

all life forms), the rational to the sensitive soul (*anima sensitiva*, common to all animals), and the mental to the intellectual soul (*anima intellectualis*, unique to humans). However, there is a certain difference in the way Agrippa thinks about the mind. Aristotle's faculty psychology divides the mind into imagination, reason, and memory. Imagination is primarily the imaging power by which all animals transfer sensory data into a unified experience of the external world. Reason is the faculty that interprets the information received from imagination and makes the decisions on which a person acts. And memory is the storehouse of all past experiences and decisions, from which reason also draws. When the reason sleeps, however, especially at night but also under the influence of strong drink or another form of intoxication, one's memory creates strange fantasies and phantasms, but these are readily swept away in the light of day. Aristotle at least hints about a higher imagination that is touched by the reason and also about a higher reason influenced by one's sense of the divine,²⁴ and Agrippa seems to favor these higher forms. From the Scholastic perspective, Agrippa's triad is, in ascending order, the higher imagination (*anima imaginativa*), the reason (*anima rationalis*), and the higher reason (*anima rationalis divina*).

Paracelsus had a triad somewhat different from Agrippa's. Antoine Faivre has identified its components as imagination (*Imaginatio*), faith (*Glauben*), and soul (*Gemüth*), and considers the Paracelsian imagination to be the most far-reaching of the early modern period.²⁵ As Paracelsus explains in a late fragment about "Proof in uncertain arts," the soul produces faith, specifically in God and the creation, while faith produces imagination, and imagination produces an "effect." The *effectum* can occur in the mind or body of the imaginer, or outside his body in Nature or in another person.²⁶ For the physician, it leads beyond imagination to true knowledge. To adapt the Scholastic terms, Paracelsus has an ascending triad of *anima imaginativa*, *anima rationalis*, and *anima imaginativa divina*. That is to say, he replaces Agrippa's higher reason with the higher imagination, which he sees as the power connecting God the Creator to Man the creature. In an undated but probably early text on images, he specifically connects his trinity of imagination, faith, and soul to the Holy Trinity, writing: "We come through the soul to God, through faith to Christ, through the imagination to the Holy Spirit" ("durch

24 Aristotle, *De Anima*, esp. 427b–29a, and *De Sensu et de Memoria*.

25 Antoine Faivre, "Vis Imaginativa: Étude sur l'imagination magique et ses fondements mythiques," id., *Accès de l'ésotérisme occidental*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1996,) vol. 2, 171–219; here 178–79.

26 Paracelsus, "Probatio in artes incertas," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 472–75; here 473. Here and elsewhere, I capitalize the word 'nature' when Paracelsus treats it as a being created by God and serving Man.

das gemüt komen wir zu got, durch den glauben zu Christo, durch die imagination empfaen wir den heiligen geist”).²⁷

The words of Agrippa are relevant to our story, for Paracelsus believes in the stars as well as in their creator. He believes that God influences people through the stars, and that knowledge of Nature comes through the light provided by the stars as they influence the individual. In many ways, his notion of one’s personal star is rather close to the daimon that, Socrates said, guides one through life, whether one knows it or not.²⁸ Agrippa refers to *daimones* leading the melancholy person to higher thought, whereas Paracelsus speaks of stars and imagination. Nevertheless, the description of the melancholic man touched by a celestial spirit, or daemon, seems entirely apt for Paracelsus, who after all considered himself a philosopher and physician.

Agrippa makes melancholy the primary problem and madness (Latin *furor*) the secondary one, arising when the melancholy is aggravated by spirits or planets. In the early text on diseases that rob the reason, Paracelsus uses the Greek word *mania*. However, he considers madness a more or less permanent condition, whether acquired at birth or later, and melancholy a more temporary one. Like poisoning by alcohol (the dipsomania of nineteenth-century medicine), melancholy leads to sensory deprivation, and thus clouds the reason; however, it can pass following proper treatment.

III Vital Spirits

The book on diseases that rob the reason starts with a brief but significant statement: “Not only are there diseases in Nature that hurt our bodies and take our health, but there are yet others that take away health and, what is worst for us, reason” (“Und wiewol nicht alein krankheiten sind aus der natur die unsern körper beschweren und uns unser gesuntheit nemen, sonder noch vil andere, die uns die gesuntheit und die vernunft nemen, das uns das schwerest ist”). He disagrees with those who say mental illnesses are the work of “disembodied beings and diabolical spirits” (“incorporalischen körper und diabolischen geister”), saying: “we know from experience that they awaken in Nature and rise up from

²⁷ Paracelsus, “Liber de imaginibus,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 13, 361–386; here 384. The text was published with short essays related to the early “major teachings” in Paracelsus, *Archidoxa*, ed. Michael Toxites (Straßburg: n.p., 1572), A1r–F3v. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

²⁸ Plato, *Republic*, book 10; 614b–18b. Socrates is relating the near-death experience of a soldier named Er and the knowledge of the afterlife that he brought back.

it” (“wir durch die experienz erkennen, das sie aus der natur entspringen und wachen”).²⁹ Indeed, he proposes to show that diseases come from Nature alone. Although he does not discount the possibility of a spiritual agency, he maintains, against the prejudices of his time, that there can always be a natural cause.

Although first published separately, a quarter-century after the death of Paracelsus,³⁰ the book on diseases that rob the reason was written as the seventh in what was to be a nine-book treatment “Of Natural Matters” (*Von den Natürlichen Dingen*). The project is something of a grab-bag. After two books on the medicinal use of chemicals and three on baths and thermal waters come books on physical and mental diseases. The eighth book is missing, and the ninth returns to chemistry and the preparation of various medicaments, ranging from antimony to potable gold (*aurum potable*).³¹ It thus ends where it begins, with the new iatrochemistry and the application of alchemical ideas in medicine. The old emphasis on herbs or wine is relegated to fragments outside the main argument. The books on physical and mental illness are divided into sections first on the varieties and causes of diseases and then on their treatment, usually with chemical remedies that Paracelsus has devised. In the book on physical diseases, he challenges the view that they originate in the body with an imbalance of its humors and can be treated effectively by purging the system. He suggests to the contrary that many start with “tartars,” sediments like the lees in a wine barrel.³² Examples include kidney stones, urinary gravel, gout, and arthritis. In the book on mental illness (*De morbus amentium*), he challenges the notion that they are either diabolic temptations or divine punishments.

The book on diseases that rob the reason survives in two printed versions in addition to manuscripts. The first version, edited by Adam von Bodenstein in 1567, includes chapters on the falling sickness, or epilepsy; general mania, including melancholy; congenital insanity; the St. Vitus dance, or corea; and the “suffoca-

²⁹ Paracelsus, “Das siebente Buch” (see note 6), 393.

³⁰ Paracelsus, *Von den krankheyten so die Vernunft berauben als da sein S. Veyts Thantz. Hinfallender siechtage Melancholia und Vnsinnigkeit [e]tc., sampt jhin warhafften curen*, ed. Adam von Bodenstein (n.p.: n.p. [Basel: Peter Perna?], 1567). A translation of this *editio princeps* by Gregory Zilboorg, including Bodenstein’s introduction, is available in Paracelsus, *Four Treatises*, ed. Henry E. Sigerist (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941), 129–212. On professional discourse concerning mental disability through the late Middle Ages, see the contribution to this volume by Eliza Buhner.

³¹ Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 59–486.

³² *OED* (see note 12), “tartar” *noun* 2a and “Tartarus” *noun*. The first word derives from Persian by way of Latin, the second from Greek by way of Latin. On “Diseases due to the ‘Tartar’,” see Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 153–56.

tion of the intellect” by strong drink or other means.³³ The second, included in the Huser edition of Paracelsus’s works and reproduced in Sudhoff’s modern edition, omits the chapter on congenital insanity, but it has a further chapter on poisons that suffocate the intellect and lead to melancholy.³⁴ Of the mental diseases under discussion, one is now considered largely genetic (idiocy or mental deficiency), while two are regarded as neurological: epilepsy and chorea. In modern terms, mania and melancholy, the bipolar states, cover the range of mental illnesses as Paracelsus diagnoses them and suggests treatments.³⁵

In both arrangements, the emphasis falls on causes outside the body and different treatments for their different manifestations. The emphasis is novel, but not entirely new. Ever since Galen, physicians claimed that there were different spirits (*spiriti*) that gave life to men. There was the air in the veins (*spiriti naturali* or natural spirits), air mixed with blood in the arteries (*spiriti vitali* or vital spirits), and a still more complex mixture in the nervous system (*spiriti animali* or animal spirits).³⁶ The spirit-system was widely known in medieval and early modern medicine and to anyone who studied it. The English alchemist Thomas Norton (ca. 1433–ca. 1513) explained:

by meanes of a treble Spirit,
The Soule of Man is to his Body knit,
Of which three Spirits one is called Vitall,
The second is called the Spirit Naturall,
The third Spirit is Spirit Animall,
* * *
And as long as these Spirits three
Continue in Man in there properitie:
So long the Soule without all strife
Woll dwell with the Body in prosperous life.³⁷

³³ On ancient and medieval notions of insanity, see the contribution to this volume by Eliza Buhrer.

³⁴ Paracelsus, *Bücher und Schriften* (see note 1), vol. 4, 39–92.

³⁵ For an outline of the “extraordinarily eclectic vision of the causes and cures of mental trouble” in Paracelsus, see Midelfort, *History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (see note 4), 116–18.

³⁶ Galen thus recognized the difference between the colder, deoxygenated venous blood and the warmer, oxygenated arterial blood; however, he did not recognize the circulation of the blood through the heart, the discovery of which is attributed to William Harvey, *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Wilhelm Fritzer, 1628). Interestingly, Harvey’s Paracelsian friend Robert Fludd used the same publisher for some of his late work and is known to have written about circulation of the blood in his own *De Anatomica Triplici* (Frankfurt a. M.: De Bry, 1620), though using the Paracelsian analogy of the heart as the sun in the body.

³⁷ “Nortons Ordinall [of Alchemy],” *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. Elias Ashmole (Lon-

When the vital spirits fail, Paracelsus says, the other spirits follow. The first sign of failure is not ill health or unhealth but insanity or unreason (*nit in ungesundheit sonder in unvernunft*).³⁸ Mania may arise from an external influence like the moon, which causes lunacy (from Latin *luna* ‘moon’), or from a bodily organ like the womb, which can cause hysteria (from Greek *hysterix* ‘womb’), but it always takes effect when the vital spirits are either sublimed or condensed in the head. This produces an internal influence (*eingebornne influenz*) that causes insanity (*unsinnikeit*), and notably mania.³⁹ Melancholy, on the other hand, arises of its own nature (*von eigener natur*).⁴⁰ This does not mean that Paracelsus accepts the humoral theory that it arises from black bile; he rather sees an innate tendency in the vital spirits to lose vitality.

The natural weakness in the vital spirits can be influenced invisibly (*ohne sichterkeit*). Much as iron is drawn to a magnet, the spirits can be drawn away from the body by a star or planet. The resulting madness, such as the lunacy caused by the moon, is natural. Lunatics and melancholics may become obsessed with thoughts about the Devil, and the obsession may cause their mania to worsen, but Paracelsus insists that the mania itself is natural. He does not deny the existence of a devil, but insists that “the Devil and his horde do not enter an insane body that is not being governed by the entire reason according to its quality” (“der Teufel und sein gesellschaft gehen in kein unsinnigen Corpor / der nicht nach seiner eigenschafft mit ganzer vernunft geregirt wird”).⁴¹ The obsession with the Devil, or the evil planet, or what not is carried out by a natural function and a very important one for Paracelsus: the imagination. The damage to one’s mental health is the result of what I shall call a diseased imagining.

Paracelsus discusses imagination when he comes to the St. Vitus Dance, which he prefers to call by its old medical name, *chorea lascivia* (literally, lustful or unrestrained dance). He identifies two causes of the disease, of which only one is natural: the escape of vital spirits from the bloodstream when a vein is opened. The main cause (*ursach*) is the formation of an opinion or impression (*aestimaz*) that becomes “accepted imagination” (*angenommen imaginaz*). Whether the person perceives the involuntary movements in others or simply thinks about them, if the perception or thought is strong enough, it seizes the imagination and

don: Nath. Brooke, 1652), 81–82. A late example of the English term appears in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667 version), book 5, lines 469–89, when the Archangel Raphael explains how the soul gains reason.

³⁸ Paracelsus, “Das siebente Buch” (see note 6), 396.

³⁹ Paracelsus, “Das siebente Buch” (see note 6), 405.

⁴⁰ Paracelsus, *Von den kranckheyten* (see note 30), B4r.

⁴¹ Paracelsus, *Von den kranckheyten* (see note 30), B4v.

the imagining that results is strong enough to obscure the reason. People who suffer from chorea may think it is a punishment of divine or supernatural origin, but they are mistaken. Their form of the affliction may not have a “natural” origin, but neither does it have a supernatural one, requiring a saint’s assistance. What happens is that they fantasize “unwittingly” (*onwissende*) about the macabre dancing.⁴² In modern terms, the causes of chorea are either physiological or psychological, and the psychological causation happens in the unconscious mind.⁴³

IV Entities Falling Together

With his analysis of the double origin of chorea or St. Vitus dance—a physical origin in the vital spirits and a mental origin in the imagination—Paracelsus makes an early contribution to the field that became known as psychosomatic medicine.⁴⁴ Chorea remains a classic example of an affliction involving the body and mind. It commonly occurs in as a *sequelum* of rheumatic fever, but only after the child has recovered, and clinical studies have suggested a psychological component in its onset.⁴⁵ Heinz Schott, a doctor of medicine in Bonn and director of the medical history institute there, has found instances of other diseases for which Paracelsus pointed to a mental origin or influence. Schott has called Paracelsus “a pioneer of psychosomatic medicine.”⁴⁶

In psychosomatic medicine, there are typically two diverse origins of a disease, one in the body and one in the mind. Etymologically, a symptom is a ‘falling together’: the Greek *sympnoma* combines words meaning ‘to fall’ (*pipein*) and ‘with’ (*syn*).⁴⁷ This sense of a symptom with more than one origin is pertinent

⁴² Paracelsus, “Das sibent buch” (see note 6), 407–08.

⁴³ See the biographical sketch of Paracelsus posted by the European Graduate School, with the claim that he was the first to discuss the unconscious: <http://www.egs.edu/library/paracelsus/biography> (last accessed on March 3, 2014).

⁴⁴ OED (see note 12), “psychomatic” adjective.

⁴⁵ A. H. Chapman, L. Pilkey, and M. J. Gibbons, “A Psychosomatic Study of Eight Children with Sydenham’s Choreia,” *Pediatrics* 24 (May 1958): 582–95. Medical recognition of the disease’s physical origin is commonly attributed to “the English Hippocrates,” Thomas Sydenham (1624–1689).

⁴⁶ Heinz Schott, “Paracelsus and Psychiatry,” *Two Millennia of Psychiatry in West and East*, ed. Toshihiko Hamanaka and German E. Berrios (Tokyo: Gakuju Shoin, 2003), 9–18; here 12. Also see Heinz Schott, “Paracelsus und die Magie der Natur,” *Religion und Gesundheit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 99–112.

⁴⁷ OED (see note 12), “symptom” noun.

to any sort of disease that involves both body and mind or soul. Carl Alfred Meier, who succeeded C. G. Jung as Professor of Psychiatry at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) in Zurich, has proposed just such a model for psychosomatic diseases, describing a synchronicity of causes. He suggests that the Latin *coincidentio* is a quite proper translation of Greek *symptoma*, the symptom being “a convergence of two distinct magnitudes,” and that the convergence of soul and body occurs in what the ancients called the *soma pneumatikon* or spiritual body. This last, he suggests, is the *tertium quid* between body and soul, where the either/or of materialism and spiritualism can be avoided.⁴⁸

For his part, Paracelsus saw the human being having five states of being (*entia*): the natural (*ens naturale*), the poisoning (*ens veneni*), the spiritual (*ens spirituale*), the stellar (*ens astrorum*), and the divine (*ens dei*). The natural entity included the basic constitution that children inherited from their parents as well as the predestined plan for each life. It included, or was supplemented by, entities of nourishment (*ens deale*) and growth or substance (*ens substantiae*).⁴⁹ It was challenged by the poisoning entity and the environmental impurities in the air, the water, or the food or drink. However, it was also guided by the knowledge coming from the stellar entity and the grace or judgment coming from God. A contemporary theologian has translated the concepts into a modern terminology:

Paracelsus believed that God and humankind were joined in a common goal, the perfection of the universe—similar to [the Kabbalistic concept of] *tikkim olam* [Hebrew “repairing the world”]—which could only be brought about by attention to our healthy relationships with our past [i.e., *ens astrale*], the healthiness of the substances we put in our bodies [*ens deale*], the genetic predisposition we have toward disease [*ens naturale*], our psychological well-being [*ens spirituale*], and finally, a right relationship with God [*ens dei*].⁵⁰

Paracelsus also taught that the *ens naturalis* entity was present in all meaningful matter, including minerals,⁵¹ which gave his writing a pantheistic cast. He admitted that his descriptions of entities (*entia*) beneath God belonged to “a hea-

⁴⁸ C. A. Meier, “Psychosomaic Medicine from a Jungian Point of View,” *Body and Soul: Essays on the Theories of C. G. Jung* (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986), 168–89; here 181–82.

⁴⁹ Paracelsus, “Bruchstücke des Buches: Von den fünf Entien, gennant volumen medicinae Paramirum de medica industria,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 163–239; here 173–74. Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 6, observes that Sudhoff rejected his own dating of this volume to the earliest years of the author’s career. Also see Ball, *Devil’s Doctor* (see note 5), 137–47.

⁵⁰ John R. Mabry, *Noticing the Divine: An Introduction to Interfaith Spiritual Guidance* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), 45.

⁵¹ Martin Ruland, *Lexicon Alchemicae sive Dictionarium Alchemisticum* (Frankfurt a. M.: Zacha-

thenist style of thought” (*ein heidnischer stylus*), but wrote that they would not harm one’s Christian faith (*glauben*) so much as they would sharpen one’s wit (*ingenium*).⁵²

Paracelsus never doubted that a person had more than one body.⁵³ He knew from Christian Scripture that there are “celestial bodies” (*somata epourania / corpora caelestia / himlische Körper*) and “bodies terrestrial” (*somata epigea / corpora terrestria / iridische Körper*) and, moreover, that there is a “natural body” (*soma psychikon / corpus animale / natürlicher Leib*) and a “spiritual body” (*soma pneumatikon / corpus spirituale / geistlichen Leib*). Saint Paul taught that after the natural body dies, “it is raised a spiritual body,”⁵⁴ while Paracelsus thought the spiritual body was always present, though invisible. However, he is not so far from Paul as the translations may suggest. Paul described a mortal human body that is not simply animate but thinking (*psychikon*). He did not separate the animate body from the thinking body, though he did report his conversion experience of being “caught up to the third heaven” (*tritou ouranou / tertium caelum / dritten Himel*), adding “whether in the body, I cannot tell, or out of the body).”⁵⁵ Paracelsus thought the bodies were present all the time in a living person. A lucid though perhaps spurious pamphlet on the plague includes a convenient summary of what Man is. The moral body combines the “earthly flesh” (*irdische fleisch*) that God has shaped from earth and water with the “animal life” (*tierisch leben*) drawn from air and fire. But in addition to the “earthly body” (*irdische leib*), Man has a “sidereal body” (*siderische leib*) that makes him unlike the other animals. While the earthly body is regulated by the elements, the sidereal body is governed by the stars and planets, from which come sickness as well as health.⁵⁶ Plague was a favorite example of a disease that came from above. Ficino himself had said as much.⁵⁷

rias Palthen, 1612), 199. In minerals the *ens naturale* takes the form of *primum materiam*, the “first matter” from which the elements are made.

52 Paracelsus, “Von den fünf Entien” (see note 49), 175–76.

53 See Thomas Willard, “The Star in Man: C. G. Jung and Marie–Louise von Franz on the Alchemical Philosophy of Gerard Dorn,” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 425–61; here 459–60.

54 1 Corinthians 14:40, 44; King James Version; Lutherbibel (1545).

55 2 Corinthians 12:2.

56 Paracelsus, “De Pestilente,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14, 597–638; here 598.

57 Ficino, *De triplici vita* (see note 23), lib. 2, cap. 7. The 1541 reprint is supplemented with a treatise on astrological health during a plague epidemic: Guillaume Insalanus (William of Lille), *Epidemiarum Antidotus* (Basel: B. Westheimer, 1541).

This much is medical, the text says. The theological dimension is more complex, but never far from the author's mind. It certainly is not far for Paracelsus, as scholars like Andrew Weeks have convincingly argued.⁵⁸ God created Adam and Eve with nothing beastly about them. For the elements in Adam and his offspring were ruled by the will of God, as it had been breathed into him when he was created. This is the spiritual body about which Paracelsus writes elsewhere: "Man has a body that does not come from matter, and thus is not subject to the physician, but has its origin in the breath of God" ("einem leib hat der mensch der nit aus dem limbo kompt, darumb so ist er dem arzt nit unterworfen, der nimpt sein ursprung aus dem einblasen von got").⁵⁹

Only after Adam and Eve succumbed to the Devil's temptation did God need to create a second moral body where humans would always be tested—tempted, for example, to eat and drink too much of the wrong substances or to misuse their sexuality in non-procreative ways. This second moral body really comes from below and perishes with the physical body. Only the spiritual body from above survives, and only if the person has lived a moral life:

Also auf das hat der mensch noch ein leib, und ist der leib den Adam und Eva im paradys volkomen gewonnen am essen des apfels, dorin er ganz ward, verstund guts und böß . . . dan do ist ein vermeling zusammen diser zweien leib, des atems und die limbi wie ein ehe . . .⁶⁰

[Thus Man has yet (another) body, which is the body that Adam and Eve gained in Paradise by eating the apple, whereby Man could know good and evil For these two bodies are united as in marriage, the one from God's breath and the one from the limbus [i.e., the original earth].

Humans would be unaware (*unwissend*) of these further bodies unless they had clarification (*clarificirung*) from the mouth of God.⁶¹ However, the physician needs

⁵⁸ Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), esp. 21–47. Also see Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), esp. xi–xiii.

⁵⁹ Paracelsus, "Bücher des Opus Paramirum," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 9, 37–119; here 117. Ruland defines *limbus* as the matter and seed of the world (*mundi . . . materiam & semen*); *Lexicon Alchemiae* (see note 51), 304: the clay from which man was made, as opposed to common earth (*limus*). For the related theology, see Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 192.

⁶⁰ Paracelsus, "Opus Paramirum" (see note 59), 119.

⁶¹ Paracelsus, "Opus Paramirum" (see note 59), 117; *clarificirung* here has the sense 'purification' and indeed 'glorification.' See *OED* (see note 12), "clarify" *verb* 2, 3, and John 13:31: "Nunc clarificatus est Filius hominis, et Deus clarificatus est in eo" (Vulgate); "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

to know about them to understand that disease often has a moral component. Paracelsus remarks that this may sound like “heathenish teaching” (*heidnischler*), but is true nevertheless.

We may line up the bodies and compare those of Paul and Paracelsus. Paul’s first pairing is of the earthly and heavenly body, and his *soma epigea* and *soma ouranou* correspond clearly to the *irdische leib* and *siderische leib* of Paracelsus. But then there is the pairing of the natural and spiritual body, the first of which must die before the second arises. Paul’s *soma psykika* corresponds to the united *irdische leib* and *siderische leib* of Paracelsus. Meanwhile, his resurrected body, the *soma pneumatikos*, is much like the breath body that Paracelsus says God gave Adam on the sixth day of Creation—a body that Paracelsus elsewhere calls the “light body” (*lichtleib*). This leaves only that body of corrupted will that accompanied the spiritual body after the Fall from grace. Paul has nothing like this, as he takes a much less optimistic view of Man’s place in the creation. Paul writes famously that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities [*archas*], against powers [*kosmokratoras*], against the rulers [*exousias*] of the darkness of the world [*aion*], against spiritual wickedness in high places [*epouranious*].”⁶² These terms are associated with the Gnostic vision of a world under the sway of astral forces that come between God and man. The last term is formed by the addition of the prefix *epi* (‘above’) to the word meaning ‘heaven.’ The term ‘cosmocrator’ refers to the ruler of the universe, who directly interferes with the plans of the good God. The word translated as ‘world’ (*aion*) refers to the world-age, which Paul thinks will end very soon. Paracelsus also looks to the millennium; however, he holds out the hope that human can move the heavens, saying: “The wise man can rule and master the heavens, and not they him” (“das weis man das gestirn rigiren und meistern kan und das gestirn nicht in”).⁶³ This is especially so given the wise man’s faith (*glauben*) in having a direct connection to God through the power of imagination.⁶⁴ Paracelsus places the dark forces with the Devil. The difference is that of the Inferno created and creatively populated during the millennium-and-a-half separating Paul and Paracelsus.

As Paracelsus thinks further about the two sides of Man—the one angelical, the other beastly—he retreats from his earlier position on diseases that rob the reason. In a small book on lunatics, probably intended as part of the unfinished *Philosophia Magna*, he writes that people are born with two kinds of reason or spirit: a divine reason (*göttlichen geist*) by which they know how to seek God and

⁶² Ephesians 6: 12; the italics indicate a word added for comprehension.

⁶³ Paracelsus, “Die 9 Bücher De Natura rerum,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11, 307–403; here 378.

⁶⁴ Paracelsus, “Die probatio in artes incertas,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 472–75; esp. 373.

keep themselves in the image of God and a bodily reason (*tierisch geist*) by which they know how to eat, fight, make love, and all the other things bodies do.⁶⁵ The divine is incorruptible; however, it can be ignored, even from birth. Meanwhile, the bodily spirit can be poisoned in any number of ways. Those who simply ignore the divine reason are fools, but those whose bodily spirits have been corrupted are lunatics and are subject to affliction by devils or stars.

V Healthy and Diseased Imaginings

With the developing theory of astral or astronomical medicine, Paracelsus moves away from his earlier assertion, in the book on diseases robbing the reason, that all disease has a natural origin. He is less optimistic that he can find a cure for anything, and begins to think that, as all illness has a sidereal aspect, so it must have a spiritual etiology. *Omne donum perfecto à Deo: Imperfectum à Diabolo* becomes his second motto: “Every perfect gift [is] from God, the imperfect from the Devil” (see Fig. 1: Portrait of Paracelsus with two mottos).⁶⁶ This does not replace his first and better-known motto: *Alterius nonn sit qui suus esse potest* (Be not another’s if you can be you own). However, it reflects the growing realization that God is the only true teacher and healer, and that the Devil is a constant threat. In the *Paramirum* or “book beyond wonder,” completed in St. Gall in 1631, he juxtaposes diseases from “tartar,” a residual salt in the organs that he compares to the lees of wine, with those from imagination and the stars.⁶⁷ It may be no accident that Tartarus was the lowest part of the Classical underworld, where the wicked were punished for their sins.⁶⁸

With *De Causis Morborum Invisibilium* (On the causes of invisible diseases), also completed in 1531, Paracelsus arrived at what his best English editor and translator, Andrew Weeks, has called a “paradigm shift” in his thinking about mental illness.⁶⁹ Whereas the earlier text on “diseases that rob the reason”

⁶⁵ Paracelsus, “Liber de lunaticis,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14, 43–72; here 43. See Midelfort, *History of Madness* (see note 4), 124–31.

⁶⁶ Based on James 1: 17 (Vulgate). Thanks to Andrew Weeks for his help in identifying motto, which appears on the reverse title pages of volumes in Huser’s edition: Paracelsus, *Bücher und Schriften* (see note 1).

⁶⁷ Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 153–56.

⁶⁸ *OED* (see note 12), “tartar” *noun* 2a and “Tartarus” *noun*. The first word derives from Persian by way of Latin, the second from Greek by way of Latin.

⁶⁹ Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings*, ed. and trans. Andrew Weeks (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 794–839; here 722 n. Quotations in this paragraph are taken from this new edition.

claimed natural causes for melancholy and St. Vitus dance, and avoided divine or demonic attribution, Paracelsus now emphasized the role of God in health and disease, while acknowledge the Devil's work but still downplaying it. The book on "invisible diseases" has a long section on "invisible works" (*Unsichtbarn Wercken*),⁷⁰ which are mainly works of the imagination. They include abnormalities, both physical and mental, that would now be considered genetic in origin. Paracelsus sees the invisible influences on the developing fetus as coming mainly from the mother, who usually has the stronger imagination, but also on occasion from the father. He says: "the child is the ground upon which the work is carried out."⁷¹ Again he uses the image of the attracting magnet; the pregnant woman attracts the influence of objects for better or worse, internalizing the images that strike her imagination and impressing them on the fetus. If she watches a painter at work, she may give birth to a child with artistic aptitude; if, however, she is drawn to a monstrosity of some sort, the child may become mad or monstrous.

A perverted imagination also gives birth to the infamous incubi and succubi that prey on men and women by corrupting the male or female seed into a "stale salt" (presumably a tartarous residue).⁷² Couplings with incubi and succubi have resulted in the births of monsters as well as infertility. Here Paracelsus tries to reconcile the folklore of night spirits (*Nachtgeister*) with his theory of Man as a microcosm (*kleinwelt*). As a lifelong bachelor, and by some reports a virgin, who thinks of children as he does of chemical amalgams, he shows knowledge of human sexuality comparable to that of Thomas Aquinas, whom he cites. For example, he suggests that vain imagining leads to infertility, and not the other way round. He also thinks that healthy children are born from people who truly want to be men and women and who so imagine themselves to be. They are from unions intended to beget offspring.

Paracelsus devised his full-blown theory of "astronomy" in the *Astronomia Magna* of his final years. In doing so, he develops a theory of disease in which illness of any sort has its origin in the heavens. Not only the spiritual diseases, like madness or pestilence, but instances of poisoning by food or sex or the environment begin in the inner, invisible body with an image of ill health that comes from one's star. Walter Pagel has maintained that the Paracelsian imagination is the ultimate source of every illness, indeed of every action: "All action," he

For the parallel text in the Sudhoff edition, see "Die Bücher von den unsichtbaren Krankheiten," *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 9, 249–350.

⁷⁰ For more information on this seminal text, see the essay by Andrew Weeks in this volume.

⁷¹ Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings* (see note 69), 803.

⁷² Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings* (see note 69), 827.

remarks, “is visualized by Paracelsus as flowing from an act of imagination—a process not connected with formal logical reasoning, but with the spirit-conscious or subconscious and in a broad sense embracing all strata of the personality.”⁷³ Carnal acts start in the visible outer body of flesh and blood, but other acts occur in the invisible inner body—the astral body formed at the time of birth. The astral body, one’s star, is remarkably like the personal daimon of Platonism and Neoplatonism. It has knowledge of the life that God has planned for one, whether as a farmer’s wife or a city physician. It knows about the diseases that will take hold of one’s physical body, and it sends appropriate images to the imagination, which, consciously or unconsciously, realizes them in the body. In this regard, all disease has a psychic etiology, and thus is psychosomatic.

Mental illness especially comes from the heavens as they are constellated in one’s personal star. For the baser instincts corresponding to the seven deadly sins are not confined to the lower world of beasts; they are drawn out by different planets and stars. The strange sympathy of star and instinct stirs up the animal spirits in one. These animal spirits create a distorted relationship between oneself and one’s world, and the result is madness of one sort or another. Pagel remarks that Paracelsus is more than usually inconsistent in treating the specifics of lunacy and other disorders caused by the joint pulls of star and beast.⁷⁴ However, he notes that the emphasis on the role of imagination and sympathetic attraction in the diagnosis and treatment of madness was refined over the next century and often deemphasized. Johann Baptist Van Helmont (1580–1644), perhaps the most innovative of Paracelsus’s successors in the seventeenth century, maintained the view of sympathetic or magnetic attraction as part of his teaching about medicine, but limited the role of magic in his writings.⁷⁵

Another great Paracelsus scholar, Will-Erich Peuckert, remarked that by astronomy Paracelsus really meant “a spiritual natural history” (*eine geistige Naturgeschichte*) or “an adept’s philosophy” (*eine adeptische Philosophie*), based on “the doctrine of the influences of the higher world” (*die Lehre von den Infl-*

⁷³ Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 111.

⁷⁴ Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 150–52.

⁷⁵ Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 185–87. Also see Heinz Schott, “Paracelsus and Van Helmont on Imagination: Magnetism and Medicine before Mesmer,” *Paracelsian Moments: Science, Medicine, and Astrology in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams and Charles D. Gunnoe, Jr., Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies, 64 (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002), 135–47; here 137–40; and Heinz Schott, “Magie—Glaube—Aberglaube: Zur „Philosophia Magna,” *Paracelsus und seine internationale Rezeption in der frühen Neuzeit: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Paracelsus*, ed. Heinz Schott and Ilana Zinguer. Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History, 86 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998), 24–35.

entien, den Einflüssen aus der oberen Welt).⁷⁶ Paracelsus called the “Great Astronomy” his “sagacious philosophy” (*Philosophia Sagax*) because it is the philosophy of the adept or sage, specifically the “adept physician, who is sagacious in medicine” (*adeptus medicus, das ist sagax in der Arznei*). The difference was that the sagacious physician was a magician, where the ordinary doctor was had mere book learning and credentials. The magician could see by a light stronger than the candle, the lamp, or even the sun; he could see by the light of Nature (*liecht von Natur*). This enabled him both to diagnose and to treat a variety of diseases. The *Astronomia Magna* begins by affirming the role of the spiritual physician: “The physician who does not practice astronomy does not become a complete physician, for more than one-half of diseases are governed by the heavens” (“der arzt der die astronomei nicht kan, der macht nicht ein volkomener arzt werden. dan mer dan der halbe teil der krankheiten wird vom firmament regiret”).⁷⁷

The “Great Astronomy” treats the macrocosm and microcosm, or great and little worlds, in a prefatory essay. Its first part, or book, is devoted to the stars and their relation to the two bodies of Man, inner and outer.⁷⁸ The second treats the “supernatural powers and operations of celestial astronomy,” while the third treats “the powers of the new Olympians or faith” (*de virtutibus Olympi novae seu fidei*). These “new Olympians” are the seven planets—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon—under the Christian dispensation. Finally, there is an “explication of the whole of astronomy,” which divides the subject into seven constituent parts and comments on each. The parts are astrology; magic; divination, including dreams and speculations; nigromancy, including the study of visions and phantasms; signatures, including palmistry and physiognomy; uncertain arts, including study of the elements through the power of imagination; and material arts such as the study of mathematics, geometry, cosmology, and instrumentation (see Fig. 2: Divisions of astronomy).⁷⁹

In another version, which identifies ten aspects of astronomy, Paracelsus devotes a whole section to what he calls *ebriecatum*—a coinage derived from Latin *ebrius* ‘drunken’ and *catum* ‘wildcat,’ in other words, suppressed reasoning. He

⁷⁶ Peuckert, *Theophrastus Paracelsus* (Stuttgart and Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1944), 366.

⁷⁷ Paracelsus, “*Astronomia Magna*,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 1–444, here 3.

⁷⁸ For a good overview of this part, see the introductory pages in *Philosophie der Grossen und der Kleinen Welt: Aus der «Astronomia Magna»*, trans. Gunhild Pörksen (Basel: Schwabe, 2008).

⁷⁹ Paracelsus offers a different schema in the “interpretatio” found in Paracelsus, *Opera Chemica et Philosophica*, ed. Fredericus Bitiskius, 3 vols. (Geneva: de Tournes, 1658), vol. 2, 647. The divisions are further subdivided in chapter 4 of book one (vol. 2, 542–50). Excerpts from this part of the *Astronomia Magna* are translated in Paracelsus, *Essential Readings*, ed. and trans. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2008), 120–44.

uses it and *inebriata* ‘inebriation’ synonymously, and defines it as the state of a man who “lacks his human wisdom [i.e., reason] and comes into another, alien wisdom” (“von seiner menschlichen weisheit fellet und kompt, und kompt in eine andere frembde weisheit”), either by drink or through another influence.⁸⁰ It tends to be temporary insanity, as if the person has fallen under the influence of a drunken star. He identifies five varieties of ebriety (the opposite of sobriety) and gives an example of each. There is mania, in which a man makes irrational interpretations of the information his senses present to him. There is frenzy, in which he becomes belligerent; phantasm, in which he makes strange gestures and or other actions; and imagination, in which his bed seems to spin around and he does not recognize himself.⁸¹ Finally, there is change (*immutatio*), in which he sees his friend as a foe or vice versa. The different types of inebriation affect different people differently. In a large crowd, he notes every man may be mad, or inebriated, in a different way. Given the choice of terminology, it seems worth noting that beer consumption at the time was far higher than it now is, being the most available form of purified water. The amanuensis of Paracelsus during his stay in Basel later reported that he was almost constantly intoxicated.⁸²

VI The Anatomy of the World

In the expanded scheme, “adept medicine” falls between the uncertain arts and adept philosophy.⁸³ It consists of diagnosis (*cognitio*) and treatment (*cura*) both of heavenly and earthly bodies, for the stars can be sick and wounded as well as causing sickness and wounds. Diagnosis is closer to the uncertain arts because there is always an element of guesswork for the physician, based on experience and insight. Treatment is closer to adept philosophy, which concerns recognition of the powers in the elements and arrangement of those powers according to the different sorts of ailments. In all of these activities, the adept physician relies on the light of Nature, which comes from the stars: not external starlight, but the internal light that guides him in his labors.

We may now ask how the Paracelsian “faculties” of faith, imagination, and soul operate in the physician—how they help him to diagnose and treat diseases of all sorts. As Paracelsus explained in a related fragment on the uncertain arts,

⁸⁰ Paracelsus, “Astronomia Magna,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 107.

⁸¹ Paracelsus, “Astronomia Magna,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 104.

⁸² Udo Benzenhöfer, *Paracelsus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997), 65.

⁸³ Paracelsus, *Essential Readings* (see note 79), 124.

faith in God and the creation generates imagination—a human counterpart to the divine imagination that first created the world and continues to sustain it.⁸⁴ Thanks to this higher imagination, the physician can see by the light of Nature and thus perceive the hidden sympathies between the macrocosm and microcosm. Diseases occur when the little world of Man is out of synch with the great world, or universe, that he inhabits. Much like the alchemist who prays and meditates to prepare himself to receive the secrets of the art as a gift of God (*donum dei*), the physician prepares his mind and soul to heal the microcosm and, in the process, to prepare the patient for a more Christian life. As the *lumen naturae* shows the correspondences, it also allows the physician to learn from the disease itself, discovering what sort of treatment is needed.

The whole process is known as the anatomy of the world (*anatomia der ganzen welt* or *anatomia mundi*).⁸⁵ Paracelsus describes it in his larger book on surgery, the major medical publication made during his lifetime.⁸⁶ There is also a lucid description in the work of his follower Oswald Croll, a professor of medicine at Marburg:

it is necessary to accommodate the disposition of the great World as of a parent to the little World as to the Son, and duly compare the Anotomy [sic] of the World with the Anotomy of Man.

The outward World is a speculative Anotomy, wherein we may see, as in a glasse, the lesser World of Man; for so much of his wonderfull and excellent fabrick and creation as is necessary for a Physitian to know, cannot be understood from the man himself: For they agree not in outward form or corporall substance, but in all their powers and vertues; as is the great World, so is the lesser, in essence and internall form they are altogether one and the same thing; the outward form at least diferenceth the World and Man. This is most evident from the Light of Nature, which is nothing else but a divine Analogy of this visible world with the body of man; For whatsoever lyeth hid and unseen in Man, is made manifest in the visible Anotomy of the whole Universe . . .⁸⁷

In a book on longevity, Paracelsus writes about restoring the prime matter out of which all things are made, people as well as metals. He calls this first substance the Iliaster, a coinage that combines Greek *hyle* ('matter') and Latin *astra* ('star'),

⁸⁴ "Die probatio in artes incertas," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 12, 472–75; here 473.

⁸⁵ See Thomas Willard, "Donne's Anatomy Lesson: Vesalian or Paracelsian?" *John Donne Journal* 3 (1984): 34–61, esp. 38–40.

⁸⁶ Paracelsus, "Das zweite Buch der Großen Wundarzney," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 10, 215–349; here 291. For a discussion of the "Great Surgery," see Peuckert, *Theophrastus Paracelsus* (see note 76), 350–63.

⁸⁷ Oswald Croll, *Basilica Chymica* (Cologne: Paulus Marcellus, 1610), 14., *Philosophy Reformed & Improved*, trans. Henry Pinnel (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1657), 24.

and he writes about restoring the original balance of the three basic substances: sulfur, mercury, and salt, his *tria prima*. For a person to achieve the long life of a biblical patriarch like Enoch and even, like Enoch, to be caught up to heaven, there must be a purification like that of a base metal being made into gold:

quare microcosmum in sua interiora anatomia reverberari oportet in supremam usque reverberationem. per hanc enim reverberationem sese impurum consumit; fixum autem, quod ad impuro destruitur, sine ferrugine permanet.⁸⁸

[. . . it is necessary for the microcosm in its interior anatomy to reverberate it [the Iliaster] with a supreme reverberation. Thereby the impure consumes itself, but the pure which is separated from the impure remains without rust.]⁸⁹

This is Paracelsus at his most esoteric, counselling men on becoming as pure as the nature spirits said to inhabit a single element: salamanders in fire, sylphs in air, and so forth. The nineteenth-century translator calls it “not only unintelligible, but almost incapable of translation.”⁹⁰ Nevertheless, we find here the same principle of aligning macrocosm and microcosm that Paracelsus uses to fight madness caused by superstitious fear of a witch’s incantation or a planet’s malign influence.⁹¹ Just as a healthy and godly imagination enables the physician to diagnose the problem, an unhealthy imagination can drive people out of their mind.

VII The Devil Returns

After Paracelsus died, in September 1541, his foes in the medical community hastened to demonize him.⁹² The longest and most telling accusations came from the Swiss physician and theologian Thomas Erastus (1524–1583).⁹³ The first of its

⁸⁸ Paracelsus, “De Vita Longa libri quinque,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 247–90; here 283. The text survives only in the Latin translation by his Basel assistant Johannes Oporinus.

⁸⁹ Paracelsus, *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*, trans. Arthur Edward Waite et al., 2 vols. (London: James Elliott, 1894), vol. 2, 341.

⁹⁰ Paracelsus, *Hermetic and Alchemical Writings* (see note 89), vol. 2, 322 n. See Thomas Willard, “Living the Long Life: Physical and Spiritual Health in Two Early Paracelsian Tracts,” *Religion und Gesundheit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 347–380.

⁹¹ Paracelsus, “Liber de Longa Vita,” *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 3, 221–45; here 226.

⁹² Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 19–24.

⁹³ Pagel, *Paracelsus* (see note 7), 311–33; Charles D. Gunnoe, Jr., *Thomas Erastus: A Physician and the Palatinate: A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation*. Brill’s Studies in Church

four parts, “concerning superstitious and magical remedies” (*de remediis superstitionis et magicis*) ran to several hundred pages.⁹⁴ Set up as a colloquy between Erastus and Furnius—an alchemical physician or “furnace man” who seems to have lost any conviction he once had—the dialogue proceeds through the whole Paracelsian cosmology with close scrutiny of ideas about magic and divination in the recently published *Astronomia Magna*. Erastus begins by asserting that the remedies of Paracelsus are not only magical but nefarious, and goes on to argue that magic is always diabolical and that Paracelsus was taught by the Devil. For him, there is no difference between the melancholic person and the demoniac.⁹⁵ He agrees that imagination can cause disturbance, but not that it can cure anything.⁹⁶ For he does not accept the existence of a higher imagination and will not admit that imagination can work wonders in the individual or the cosmos.

Having sought to show that madness was natural and not demonic, Paracelsus was thus painted as a demoniac himself, taught by demons from Hell, not daimons of the planets and elements. It was a common strategy of Reformation-era polemics to treat one’s adversary as the Devil’s agent.⁹⁷ Before long, Paracelsus was being denounced as a religious extremist of all sorts, an enthusiast in the word’s original sense of a person who feels divinely inspired.⁹⁸ Supporters of his medical ideas began to play down the religiously heterodox ideas they contained—for example, the rather gnostic account of Creation that Erastus discussed.⁹⁹ They refrained from publishing his primarily religious manuscripts and were happy to let the radical ideas be attributed to Valentin Weigel, who had access to his manuscripts and interest in them, or later to Jakob Böhme.¹⁰⁰ They

History, 48 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 263–338.

94 Thomas Erastus, *Disputationem de Medicina nova Philippi Paracelsi, Pars Prima: in qua, quae de remediis superstitionis et magicis curationibus ille prodit, praecipuae examinatur* (Basel: Pietro Perna, 1572). Erastus drew upon the earlier attack on Paracelsus and his followers by the Dutch physician Johann Weyer, for which see the contribution to this volume of Thomas G. Benedek.

95 Erastus, *Disputationem*, 207–08.

96 Erastus, *Disputationem*, 109: “Contra Paracelsi sentiam de imaginatione.”

97 Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 256, n. 57, observes that Erastus wrote the first volume at a time when he had been ejected from the Reformed church of Zwingli for anti-Trinitarian beliefs, and speculates that he hoped the case against Paracelsus would help his defense. Some of the most vitriolic attacks, both in word and image, were aimed at the Jesuits, whom the Protestant propagandists pursued with aplomb, wit, and also outright viciousness. See Ursula Paintner, “Des Papsts neue Creatur”: Antijesuitische Publizistik im deutschsprachigen Raum (1555–1618). Chloe. Beihefte zum Daphnis, 44 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011).

98 Gilly, “*Theophrastia Sancta*” (see note 13), 155.

99 Erastus, *Disputationem*, 3–9.

100 See the contribution to this volume by Florian Westhagen and Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher.

largely succeeded during the seventeenth century, when the *Zeitgeist* favored greater separation of science and religion. But before the century was out, he was drawn back into the discussion as the father of fanatic sectarianism in Western Europe.

In 1691, a theologian newly appointed to the Lutheran university in Greifswald published a long and thoroughly documented history of the enthusiastic or esoteric tradition in Christianity. Over a sequence of twelve chapters, Ehregott Daniel Colberg explained how Platonic and Hermetic ideas had shaped a mystical, if not always heretical, strand of Christian thought, and how they had been brought to the modern world by Paracelsus, Weigel, the Rosicrucians, and Böhme, in that order.¹⁰¹ Colberg was even more of a heresiologist than Erastus, but he made thoughtful connections. Indeed, his account of “Platonic-Hermetic Christianity” has been called the first comprehensive account of what is now studied as Western esotericism from antiquity through the Reformation.¹⁰² Colberg’s main point was to expose Paracelsus as the “initiator of contemporary enthusiasm” (*Anfänger der heutigen Schwärmerei*).¹⁰³ The German word *Schwärmerei* almost defies translation into English. “Enthusiasm” or “fanaticism,” though technically accurate, do not convey the sense of swarming, rapturous, rabble-rousing rhetoric that Luther associated with Thomas Münzer and Paracelsus, in his Basel lectures, with “sophists” parrotting old remedies.¹⁰⁴ The Victorian sage Thomas Carlyle wrote about “that singular phenomenon which the Germans call *Schwärmerei* (‘enthusiasm’ is our poor Greek equivalent), which simply means ‘Swarmery,’ or ‘the Gathering of Men in Swarms,’ and what prodigies they are in the habit of doing of believing, when thrown into that miraculous condition.”¹⁰⁵ Our poor French equivalent, “fanaticism” has the grace of evoking the temple

101 Ehregott Daniel Colberg, *Das Platonisch-Hermetische Christenthum begreifend die historische Erzelung vom Ursprung und vielerley Secten der heutigen Fanatischen Theologie, Untern Namen der Paracelsisten / Weigelianer / Rosencreutzer / Quäcker / Böhmiſten / Wiedertäufer / Bourignisten / Labadisten / und Quietisten* (1691; Leipzig: Joh[ann]. Lude[wig]. Gleditch und M. G. Weidmanns, 1710). On the Labadists, see the contribution to this volume by Martha Moffit Peacock.

102 Wouter Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 107–114;

103 Colberg, *Das Platonisch-Hermetische Christenthum* (see note 101), 178.

104 Paracelsus, ‘De modo pharmacandi’ (elaborations), Sudhoff, vol. 4, 476. For Luther’s use of the word see Wörterbuchnetz <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/?lemid=GS20656>; consulted Jan. 8, 2014.

105 Thomas Carlyle, *Shooting Niagra: And After?* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1864), 4. The *OED* does not recognize Carlyle’s coinage, but only English uses of *Schwärmerei*. The earliest instance noted (*OED* [see note 12], “schwärmerei,” n.) is from a reviewer of a book about Lessing, who calls it “a word untranslatable, because the thing itself is un-English.” Colberg, however,

(Latin *faunus*) in which the god speaks to the fanatic. For Colberg, the Platonism of early Christians like Origen was an error in reasoning (*Grund-Irrtum*) and led to a series of errors.¹⁰⁶ In the phrase of Paracelsus, it robbed the reasoning. Unlike Erastus, Colberg did not speak of demons, but he demonized Paracelsus no less effectively, suggesting that he led Weigel, Böhme, and others into the peculiar madness known as *Schwärmerei*.

Ironically, Paracelsus wrote about sects in the last part of his book on invisible diseases..¹⁰⁷ He regarded sects, including that of Luther, as irrational perversions of God's word. He thought of faith as the cure for afflicted reason; by faith, however, he meant faith in God alone, and not in another man's reason, be he Luther or Zwingli or the Pope.¹⁰⁸ This may seem contradictory from a man who wrote extensively about the Bible, but it reflects both of his mottos, cited above. One should be one's own person and not another's, for good guidance came from God alone. When one simply aped another man's thoughts or behaviors, the imagination was perverted as well as the reason. That is why the "mad faith" (*tollen glauben*) of Anabaptists made it hard to distinguish them from victims of epilepsy.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps one should regard Paracelsus as a Christian freethinker—not a Deist, to be sure, but a man who, like the famous English Freethinker John Toland, thought of organized religion as the "exoteric" side of knowledge.¹¹⁰

Lucien Febvre, a founder of the *Annale* school of French historiography, wrote a classic study of unbelief in the sixteenth century with special attention to François Rabelais (ca. 1494–1553). In it he observed that Christianity was no more a matter of choice for most Europeans at the time than was nationality; they were born and died Christians, whatever they did or did not come to believe. He included interesting comments on Paracelsus, Rabelais's near contemporary, as a fellow physician practicing in a world of demons. Their common cosmology led him to ask whether "occultism" predisposed men "to free themselves from the tutelage of religion" and provided "a possible support for irreligion," and he was inclined to think it did.¹¹¹ Lefebvre's discussion squares with that in another celebrated study of Rabelais, by the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975).

had found an English example in the early Quakers and included in chapter "Von der Quäckery" [sic] in *Das Platonisch-Hermetische Christentums*, 291–307.

106 Colberg, *Das Platonisch-Hermetische Christentums*, 101.

107 Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings* (see note 69), 885–936.

108 Paracelsus, *Liber de lunaticis* (see note 65), 60–61.

109 Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings* (see note 69), 782–83.

110 John Toland, *Clidophorus, or, Of the Exoteric and Esoteric Philosophy* (London: n.p., 1720).

111 Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (1942; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 421–54, esp. 449–

In a book written at about the same time as Lefebvre's, though published only much later, Bakhtin drew on Paracelsus's view that philosophy is the first pillar of medicine in order to press home about his now famous point about the body: that the sixteenth century saw the ascent of medicine to the central position in the humanities, and at the same time the focus on the body as the center of the universe.¹¹² This led to a new world picture and to the view of a cosmic Man—the Macroposophus of Christian Cabala—which, like Rabelais's Pantagruel, was more than a little grotesque. Bakhtin maintains that Rabelais was a complete materialist, always concerned with embodiment and never with magical correspondences. The world of Pantagruel is a world of Man and Nature, where God and the Devil are topics of conversation. There is no sense of impending apocalypse, but neither is there a lack faith in the power of imagination.

There is a world of difference between the two men.¹¹³ Paracelsus has his eyes on the heavens and his hopes in the God who created them, while Rabelais focused clearly on the earth and whatever dropped on it. Paracelsus advocated a cosmic anatomy, while Rabelais was happy to perform morbid anatomies for his medical students. Lefebvre thought it "utter madness" to connect Rabelais with "freethinkers" of later centuries,¹¹⁴ but he might have said the same about Paracelsus. What seems certain is that Paracelsus, like Rabelais, had a deep, almost biblical contempt for fools and foolishness. Like Saint Paul, they did not suffer fools gladly, though they were often amused. In the "Great Philosophy," a work-in-progress subtitled "Of divine works and secrets of nature" and containing the well-known book on nymphs and other fabulous creatures, Paracelsus starts with books on sages, demoniacs, lunatics, and fools. The sage was per force the person who ignored the wisdom of God in Nature. He was not insane, let alone demonically possessed, but he had abandoned his God-given reason. The fool could not understand the Christian message, first of all. His foolishness is the necessary consequence of original sin, though it can also be a clever response to life in the fallen world.¹¹⁵ Paracelsus recognizes that some fools have goitres, later associ-

50; originally published as *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XV^e Siècle: La Religion de Rabelais*, rev. ed. (1942: Paris: Albin Michel, 1962).

112 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (1965; Cambridge, MA, and London: M. I. T. Press, 1968, 359–65.

113 For similarities, see Gregory Zilboorg, "The Place of Paracelsus in the History of Psychiatry," Paracelsus, *Four Treatises*, ed. Henry E. Sigerist (see note 30), 129–34; here 129–32.

114 Lefebvre, *The Problem of Unbelief* (see note 111), 460.

115 Paracelsus, "De generatione stultorum liber," *Sämtliche Werke*, 14, 73–93; here 73–74.

ated with iodine deficiency and thyroiditis; but because people with goiters are not necessarily fools, he does not make a direct connection.¹¹⁶

VIII The Good Physician

Although he loves to classify diseases and draw distinctions, Paracelsus is often inconsistent. The line between lunacy and foolishness is often unclear, as is that between a spiritual and a natural illness or between disturbance of the reason or the imagination. In modern parlance, such problems are notoriously “multifactorial,” being both environmental and genetic in origin. Especially when the terms are as emotionally laden as “lunatic” and “fool,” or “demoniac” and “saint,” they get used imprecisely. Like his older contemporaries Sebastian Brant (1457–ca. 1521), author of *Das Narrenschiff* (The Ship of Fools, 1494), and Desiderius Erasmus (1486–1536), author of *Moriae Encomium* (The Praise of Folly, 1509), Paracelsus saw *Narrenwerk* (fool’s work) in the learned writings of physicians and theologians and preferred to think of official city physicians (*Stadtärzte*) as city fools (*Stadtnarren*).¹¹⁷ They were fools, he thought, because they put their social status above their calling, and thus served Mammon rather than God. As we have seen, Paracelsus thought that the physician had a divine calling, that he must care for the spirit of a patient as well as the body, and that he himself was called both to preach and to heal. He thus tried to work in the light of God as well as the light of Nature.

These dual callings account for much of the difficulty in his writings. Despite the valiant efforts of Sudhoff and other editors, they defy neat separation into medical and scientific texts on the one hand and theological and social texts on the other. Unlike the sun and moon, the twin lights of God and Nature do not neatly alternate. They are always shining in the pages of his books, though one may be brighter here and the other there, and such varied lighting is responsible, ironically, for much of the famous obscurity. Ironically too, the blending of trinitarian thought and biblical evidence with medical observation, by which he hoped to forge a modern theory of medicine, is responsible for the distinctly pre-modern sound that his writing has today.

The many pronouncements of Paracelsus on aspects of mental health, in major and minor texts spanning his entire career, actually seem to regress,

¹¹⁶ C. F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and “Intellectual Disability”* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 235–38.

¹¹⁷ Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 99–109.

becoming less and less modern over the years. The early book on *Diseases that Rob the Reason*, with its insistence that they all have natural causes, sounds quite progressive when compared to the later book on *Spiritual Illnesses*, let alone the remarks in the *Great Astronomy* on disorders caused by the heavens. Perhaps that is why the practicing psychiatrist Gregory Zilboorg chose to translate the early text. In his introduction, Zilboorg wondered how it was that “Paracelsus anticipated the descriptive method in psychiatry by almost fifty years,” showing “rich clinical experience in mental disease.”¹¹⁸ The genius of the man, he suggests, “was of a psychological nature”: whereas Galen sought to describe the body as a mechanism, “Paracelsus never lost sight of the patient as a human being” and advanced a vitalist model that did not take hold in medicine for another century or two.¹¹⁹ The violent exception to Galen helps to explain his rough and rude treatment of medical authority, but it does not explain Zilboorg’s preference for the early text. That preference, I suspect, comes from the concentration on mental illness itself, without the later attempts to place the medical issues in a cosmic context.¹²⁰

We may now return to the question whether or not Paracelsus suffered the sort of bipolar disorder that his recent biographer suspects. In many ways, the diagnostic terms of today are less useful than those of his day, five hundred years ago. In the world of Reformation Germany, Paracelsus nicely fits Agrippa’s model of the melancholic man seized by the sidereal spirit and drawn to philosophy and medicine.¹²¹ He even fits the model of the enthusiast, who was said to be the melancholic man with a touch of fire that gave him the energy to speak as though *en theos*—inspired by God or literally, in God, a God-speaker as his name Theophrastus betokened.¹²² Detractors called him the “master of enthusiasts” (*magister enthusiastarum*), at a time when they were known as religious fanatics, such as the Anabaptists.¹²³ Where diagnostic criteria are concerned, the accounts of his contemporaries show far more evidence of mania

118 Zilboorg, “The Place of Paracelsus” (see note 113), 131–32. See the comments on Zilboorg in the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

119 Zilboorg, “The Place of Paracelsus” (see note 113), 130, 133.

120 On the Neoplatonic cosmology of Paracelsus, see Gregory Zilboorg, *A History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941), 196–200.

121 Because Paracelsus rejected the theory of the four humors in favor of the alchemical doctrine of the *tria prima*, or *drei dengen*, he would have diagnosed an excess of mercury (the volatile element) in the person, when compared with the salt and sulfur (the bodily and fusible elements).

122 *OED* (see note 12), “enthusiast” noun 1. This sense is now considered obsolete.

123 Quoted in Gilly, “*Theophrastia Sancta*” (see note 13), 155.

than depression.¹²⁴ His writing, approaching graphomania, showed “flights of ideas,” his lay preaching suggest he felt under “pressure to keep talking.” His mind seemed to race ahead, so that he rarely slept more than a few hours at a time, and then fully dressed, before he would resume writing or dictating. What he said and wrote gave others the impression of “inflated self-esteem or grandiosity.” Meanwhile, his activity in the patient’s room or the makeshift alchemical laboratory or simply on the road demonstrated a high level of “goal-related activity” and “psychomotor agitation.”¹²⁵ We cannot know whether there was a reduced sense of self-worth behind the talk and writing, which would certainly point to depression, especially after his ill-treatment by professional rivals in Basel and elsewhere. Thus the only evidence of real depression—other than the distraction and withdrawal from society that Agrippa mentions in the inspired philosopher and physician—is frequent thought about death and dying. But that was only natural in a physician and lay preacher, especially in times of pestilence.

The biographer who suggests manic-depression in Paracelsus thinks that it could have arisen from disillusionment. He had been unable to find a reliable patron or publisher, but that was not all. “His earlier trust in chemical remedies seems to him now [ca. 1531] to have been a delusion.”¹²⁶ The presumed disillusionment led, he suggests, to the book on invisible diseases. This case, though nicely stated, seems overblown; for if Paracelsus had a crisis, it was a perpetual crisis, from his first years as a physician and lay preacher to the last. If anything happened, he adjusted his views about the relationship between God and the physician, but only slightly. Perhaps God was not ready to reveal the treatment for all diseases; perhaps God needed the physically and mentally ill to encourage Christian charity. The *Astronomia Magna*, on which he was probably still working at the end of his life, has a balance of natural and spiritual disease not unlike that in his earliest books and includes their sense of the *ens divinis* or divine entity in Man. In medical and theological writings, he “preaches the gospel of all the creatures” (“predigt das evangelium aller creatur”),¹²⁷ based on the commandment in the Gospel according to Saint Mark (16:15): “Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” It was a message about the salvation of the material creation through the final act of the Almighty. He believed that the world

124 The main source is a letter by Oporinus, quoted in Udo Benzenhöfer, *Paracelsus* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997), 65.

125 Words in quotation marks are from “DSV IV Criteria for Manic Episode,” Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/00/slides/3590s1c/tsld002.htm> (last accessed on March 3, 2014).

126 Ball, *The Devil’s Doctor* (see note 5), 297.

127 Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 191.

was nearing its end. As he grew older he became convinced that all his patients were in the hands of God, the great and good physician who had created all diseases and all cures. Going to the sources meant, for him, going to Nature and God rather than Galen and Avicenna. Using a familiar medieval *topos*,¹²⁸ he writes about “the book in which the alphabet of secrets is written visibly, discernibly intelligibly, and legibly by the finger of God” (“das buch, in dem die buchstaben der geheimnus sichtlich, erkenntlich, greiflich und austrucklich geschriben findet durch den finger gotes”).¹²⁹

Paracelsus took care to leave his unpublished works with his disciples and patrons.¹³⁰ He expected they would be published someday. One of his first posthumous editors, Michael Toxites, wrote to his own patron that God must have willed the books of Paracelsus to be reach a wide audience.¹³¹ He added that he thought the real wish of God was this: that people search for the secrets that would be revealed to them before the Apocalypse.

128 For the medieval *topos* of the *Weltbuch*, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1948; New York: Pantheon, 1953), 319–326. Also see Webster, *Paracelsus* (see note 9), 153–56.

129 Paracelsus, “Liber Azoth sive de Ligno et Linea Vitae,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14, 545–95; here 547–48. Sudhoff treats the book as spurious, but Will-Erich Peuckert includes it with other “Magische Schriften” in *Paracelsus Werke*, 5 vols. (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1965–1968), vol. 5, 337–389. The tablets given to Moses at Mount Sinai are said to have been written *digito dei* (Exodus 31: 18 Vulg.).

130 Gilly, “*Theophrastia Sancta*” (see note 13), 154, 163, 168.

131 Letter to Ludwig VI, Elector of the Palatine, January 15, 1574, in *Der Frühparacelsismus*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle, vol. 2. Frühe Neuzeit: Studien und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur und Kultur im europäischen Kontext, 89 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), 424. Paracelsus left manuscripts with an earlier Elector of the Palatine.



Fig. 1: Portrait of Paracelsus with two mottos

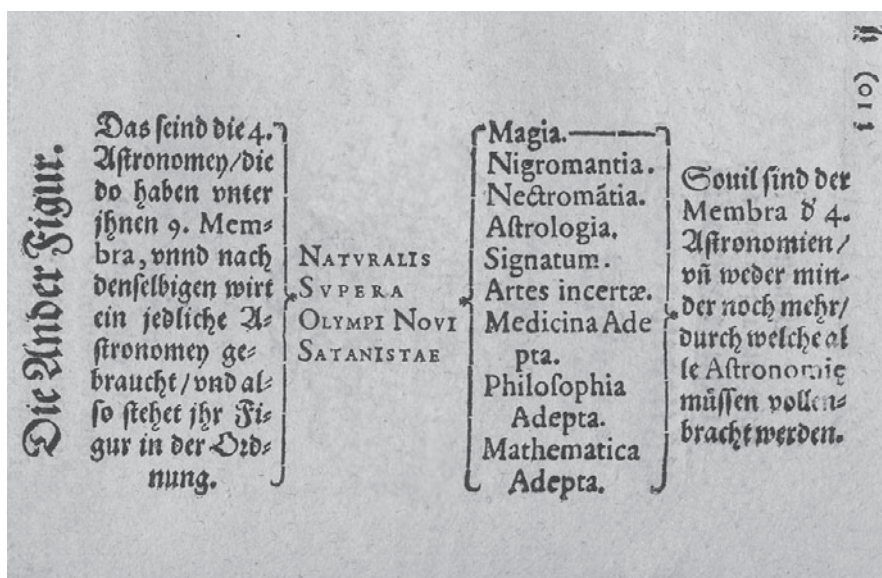


Fig. 2: Divisions of astronomy

Marilyn Sandidge (Westfield State University, MA)

Banishing “Franticks” in a Royal Wedding Celebration: Campion’s *The Lords’Masque*

When scholars cite the fascination with madness in early modern England, they cite its representation in Jacobean plays, the many treatises written on it, the many patients who consulted with doctors over it, and the frequent references to Bedlam, the Bethlehem Hospital then dedicated to the care of the insane.¹ To this list we can add an antimasque of insane dancers in the Jacobean court masque *The Lords’Masque*, written by Thomas Campion to celebrate the marriage of King James I’s daughter Elizabeth to the German Prince Frederick V, Elector of Palatine, in February 1613.² If it weren’t for these other examples illustrating the popularity of representations of the insane at this time, we might think that a group of mad people emerging from a cave to dance wildly might be a strange feature in an entertainment commissioned by the king to celebrate a royal wedding.

The court masque grew out of earlier forms of musical and dramatic entertainment for celebration at royal courts across Europe and, by the Jacobean period in England, had become an magnificent spectacle of song and dance where an elaborate set and extravagant costumes lent a mysterious air to a performance arranged around a brief narrative frame often allegorical or mythical in nature. Drawing on the neo-Platonic concept of music and dance as representations of divine accord, court masques were designed to imitate cosmic harmony through the symmetrical movements of dancers in attune with carefully balanced measures of music in order to display eternal truths through allegorical representations.³ On occasion, the monarch him- or herself participated in the masque, usually as a dancer, so

1 See Carol Thomas Neely, “‘Documents in Madness’: Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare’s Tragedies and Early Modern Culture,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42.3 (1991): 315–38.

2 Thomas Campion. “Lords’ Masque,” *Campion’s Works*, ed. Percival Vivian (1909; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 89–100. The text is also available online as the 1898 version, *English Masques*, ed. Herbert Arthur Evans (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), 72–87, at <http://www.luminarium.org/editions/lordsmask.htm> (last accessed on March 19, 2014). The work was not originally printed on its own but was appended to the *Lord Knowles Entertainment* (1613) without its musical accompaniments. All citations will be to Vivian edition and page and line numbers will come in text.

3 David Lindley, “Introduction,” *The Court Masque*, ed. David Lindley. The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester, UK, and Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984), 1–15; here 5. Also see Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927); Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Jerzy Limon, *The Masque of Stuart Culture* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

that the masque became a “ceremonious play”⁴ displaying in a visual metaphor the link between the royal head of court and an ideal rendition of that court. As they grew from relatively simple to more complex performances designed by England’s finest composers, musicians, poets, playwrights, and scenic designers at that time, the masques became vehicles to project philosophical points of view or political messages into aristocratic celebrations. Looking at the role they played in Stuart England, David Lindley says the masque was an “idealisation of the court by whom and for whom it was performed . . . a genre full of implication and significance.”⁵ Stephen Orgel agrees, stating, “The masque presents the triumph of an aristocratic community; at its center is a belief in the hierarchy and a faith in the power of idealisation.”⁶ Yet, despite these lofty intentions, no matter how much the composer of the masque strives to create a reenactment of ideal realities, Jonas Barish argues there is always a suggestion that the masque “represents a society not so much aspiring after, as joyfully contemplating its own well-being.”⁷ For many at court, their only interest would have been in dancing in an extravagant spectacle while watching other courtiers display their grace and beauty in the most lavish and expensive settings and costumes money could buy.⁸

Many members of the Jacobean audiences passed on their impressions of the spectacle but almost nothing about the ideas expressed in the masque, the lure of the material world far surpassing that of the ideal.⁹ Campion himself showed he was aware of the differences between his wish to show ideal truths and the interests of the courtiers watching or performing in *The Lords’ Masque* when he admonishes the young gentleman dancers to remember their dignity and to perform with the “richest show of solemnity.”¹⁰ It is into this ambivalent court setting that madness is introduced by Campion to be swept away by the soft and calming sounds of Orpheus’s music and where Orpheus proclaims it is a “mad age” (91, 14) that does not recognize the power of music, poetry, and dance “to induce a Courtly miracle” (93, 2). Underlying the conception of the mad figures in the antimasque, thus, I argue, are types of idle and unrestrained behavior known to be exhibited at the Jacobean court.

4 Lindley, *Court Masque* (see note 3), 3.

5 Lindley, *Court Masque* (see note 3), 2, 13.

6 Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power, Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1975), 40.

7 Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 244.

8 James paid £50,000 for the entertainment alone at his daughter’s wedding.

9 Lindley, *Court Masque* (see note 3), 6.

10 Campion, *Campion’s Works* (see note 2), 94, 5–6.

The Antimasque Convention

First found in Ben Jonson’s masque *The Queen’s Masque* in 1609, an antimasque was designed to precede the main masque as a way to heighten the dramatic impact of the piece by projecting a troubling, dark and chaotic vision of something needing to be put right. Following Queen Ann’s request for a dance or show in the *Queen’s Masque* to precede hers as a foil, Jonson stages a dance by twelve witches as a “spectacular of strangeness, producing multiplicity of Gesture,” whose foul forms and movements suddenly give way to the elegant, virtuous, and beautiful display of twelve historical queens played by Queen Ann and her ladies.¹¹ Since King James I had written a book on Satan and witchcraft entitled *Demonology* in 1597, Jonson was clearly playing on the king’s interests when he chose the subject of the first antimasque. As designed by Jonson, these antimasques, antic, ironic inversions of the spectacular scenes exalting the aristocracy, could subtly question the context behind social behaviors or governmental policies without outwardly offending the monarch. Since the masque to follow in some way purges or neutralizes the antimasque figures and the associations linked to them, the symbolic discord provides only the slightest hint that a work might display a more complex view of the Jacobean world than is seen at first glance. In Ben Jonson’s hand, the antimasque could simultaneously satirize and praise.¹² Leah Marcus argues, in fact, that Jonson’s later masques in particular satirize abuses tolerated or ignored by the king, so that the need to reform these abuses should have been clear to the audience.¹³ Those who created these court masques could, therefore, subtly encourage social, philosophical, or political change from the top down at court. Marcus also points, however, to the instructive aspect of masques from the monarch’s point of view: “Happily . . . when a king’s subjects fail him, a masque writer can be called in to fill the gap.”¹⁴

Along with Campion’s masque performed at the Princess Elizabeth’s wedding, two other masques were composed for the event but performed after the marriage date because of the incredibly large crowds around Whitehall Palace and the exhaustion of the king. We see as characters in their antimasques, first, in Chapman’s *The Memorable Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln’s Inn* per-

11 Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925–1952), vol. 7, 282.

12 Michael W. Stamps, “Review of Lesley Mickel, ‘Ben Jonson’s Antimasques: A History of Growth and Decline,’” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31.4 (2000): 1092–94.

13 Leah Sinanoglou Marcus, “‘Present Occasions’ and the Shaping of Ben Jonson’s Masques,” *English Literary History* 45, 2 (1978): 201–25; here 221–22.

14 Marcus, “‘Present Occasions’” (see note 13), 216.

formed the next day (February 15, 1613), boys dressed as baboons in “Neapolitan suits and great ruffs” who burst out of a mountain next to a hollowed out tree to contrast to the courtiers in main masque, interestingly enough, the Princes of Virginia, represented as Native Americans dressed in silver and gold cloth with feathers and beadwork adorning their costumes.¹⁵ In the second piece, Francis Beaumont’s *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray’s Inn*, not performed until February 20, 1613, rustic figures dressed for country sports frolic about in the antimasque before the main masque dancers appear as Naiads, Hyades, and Cupids.¹⁶ The royals and the other wedding guests would then have seen subversive scenes of madmen, baboons, and country rustics performing in the antimasques if the entertainment had gone as planned on the wedding date itself. Although baboons in courtier outfits and country rustics, two groups easily and frequently satirized, have a somewhat lighthearted air about them, figures of the insane are both more ominous and more pointed in the nature of their satire. It was not, however, unknown for monarchs and their noble courts to be recognized among the ranks of the insane, as Robert Burton, for example, points out in his immensely popular *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), written a little later during James’s reign:

The giddy tumults and the foolish rage
Of kings and people.
How mad they are, how furious, and upon small occasions, rash and inconsiderate.¹⁷

The Lords’ Masque

To briefly summarize the scenes in the *Lords’ Masque*, the piece begins with the antimasque in which, at Orpheus’s command, Mania frees the twelve “Franticks” from their underground cave who dance wildly while tossing Entheus up and down accompanied by loud and confounding music. Eventually Orpheus tames

¹⁵ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 Vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), vol. 3, 260–62.

¹⁶ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (see note 15), vol. 3, 234–35.

¹⁷ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1927), 93. All citations will be from this edition and page numbers will be given in text. An online text is also available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10800> (last accessed on March 18, 2014). I will cite many lines from Burton’s seminal work to show the prevailing beliefs about the types of insanity displayed in this antimasque even though it had not been published when Campion composed his masque. Burton was, however, known to be working on his text even before the masque was performed.

them through the sound of a solemn air and they slip back down underground. In between each scene that follows, songs are performed.¹⁸ Orpheus next brings in Prometheus, who brings down heavenly fires represented by male dancers. Eight ladies previously turned to statues by Jove are released and they all dance. Next, the masquers invite audience members to join them in dancing, including the newly married couple, and all dance a good while. After this in comes Sybilla pulling an obelisk and accompanied by statues of Elizabeth and Frederick, whom she addresses in Latin to predict their good fortune in the future. Once again the masquers then dance to celebrate the union before an epithalamic ending signals it is time for the couple to go to bed, and all dance out.

As an accomplished musician, Thomas Campion would have embraced the neo-Platonic concept of the harmonizing qualities of music, and he affirms his belief in the analogy between musical harmony and divine harmony in a passage from *Observations in the Art of English Poesy*, by Thomas Campion (1602): “The world is made by Symmetry and proportion, and is in that respect compared to Musick, and Musick to Poetry . . . , confounding musick and Poesy together.”¹⁹ Thus, it makes sense that it is a musical figure, here Orpheus, who orchestrates this metaphoric celebration of an ideal union between the young couple, their families, and their countries. However, as this passage from *Observations* further indicates, poetry is also a correlation of divine proportion, and Campion’s Orpheus is also portrayed as a poet, shown here wearing a laurel wreath with two wings and holding a silver bird, a white swan, an emblem linked to poetry through flights of fancy.²⁰ The platonic view of poetry as that “which is created only when the Muses have seized and taken possession of the poet’s soul, inspiring him to ‘rapt passionate expression,’” thus, also underlies Campion’s Orpheus.²¹ Through his role as creator of both music and poetry, Orpheus embodies the artist whose work reflects the flawless creation of a divine world envisioned here with the young couple at its pinnacle.

¹⁸ Andrew J. Sabol has attempted to reconstruct the musical score and song lyrics for the *Lords’ Masque* in *A Score for ‘The Lords’ Masque’ by Thomas Campion, Performed on 14 February 1613* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 1993). Most critics are not convinced that the twenty-five pieces he identifies as performed in the masque were actually a part of the original score.

¹⁹ Campion, *Campion’s Works* (see note 2), 33.

²⁰ A. Leigh DeNeef, “Structure and Theme in Campion’s *The Lords’ Masque*,” *Studies in English Literature* 17 (1977): 95–103; here 96.

²¹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “The Platonic Frenzies in Ficino,” *Dijkstra* 1747 (2009): 553–67; here 556. Available online at http://www.academia.edu/1170518/The_Platonic_Frenzies_in_Ficino_2010_ (last accessed on March 19, 2014).

The idea of possessive fury, a “divine-sent” or divinely inspired state of mind, is central to the work. In the neo-Platonic myth that underlies the *Lords’Masque*, the soul must ascend back to the Divine One through four stages of fury, beginning with poetic fury, represented in the masque by Entheus; then moving to a fury that leads to knowledge of sacred mysteries, represented by Prometheus; next to prophetic fury, represented by Sibylla; and finally to the fury of love, represented by the glorious bride and groom at hand, with each fury depicted as progressively less earthly and more spiritual.²² Although Plato’s *Phaedrus* is the original source, Campion probably derived his understanding of this myth from later writers such as the Italian Marsilio Ficino and a French writer most likely to have been Campion’s direct source, Pontus de Tyard, whose *Solitaire premier* (1551) states that “poetry depended upon a divine inspiration—or ‘fury’—and had divine origins.”²³ In addition to discussing these four furies, Plato had begun this discussion in *Phaedrus* by explaining the distinction between the madness of insanity and the madness of divine inspiration; hence, the link in Campion’s work between the furies of the antimasque and those in the masque proper goes back to the original source of the myth.

Having been educated at Cambridge in the humanist tradition of classical thought, educated next in law at the Inns of Court, and finally trained in medicine at the University of Caen, Campion would have studied mania and melancholia with their individual sub groupings of madness from several different perspectives: mania as a metaphor for chaos and disorder and mania as a medical and legal problem. Scholars and writers during the early modern period in England were for the most part no longer interested in viewing madness only in terms of the intersection among the human, divine, and demonic realms described by Albrecht Classen in the introduction to this volume.²⁴ Instead, they began to examine madness outside of the context of sin and demonic possession. It gradually came to be viewed in secular, medical, or psychological terms in treatises such as those examined in a study by Carol Neely: Edward Jorden’s *The Suffocation of the Mother*, Timothy Bright’s *Treatise of Melancholy*, and Reginald Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft*.²⁵ Moreover, although he was an Anglican parish priest as well as an Oxford scholar, Robert Burton devotes only a very small part of

²² David Lindley, *Thomas Campion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 193–95.

²³ Kathryn Banks, *Cosmos and Image in the Renaissance: French Love Lyric and Natural–Philosophical Poetry* (London: Legenda, 2008), 12. See also the discussion in Lindley, *Thomas Campion* (see note 22), 191–93.

²⁴ Neely, ““Documents in Madness”” (see note 1), 318.

²⁵ Neely, ““Documents in Madness”” (see note 1), 318

his seminal work *The Anatomy of Melancholy* to what he calls the supernatural causes and cures of melancholy and advises people who want to seek cures for mental illnesses from God also to consult a physician.²⁶

In fact, his *Anatomy* is laid out as a medical text in which he dissects melancholy in the physical and psychological manifestations of disease, citing, for example, the connections between it and bad parenting, old age, unclean water, death of friends, or a distempered liver, to name just a few of the causes he lists. Campion’s presentation of the mad figures, the Franticks described below that perform in the antimasque, blends features derived from contemporary secular medical belief and the humanist tradition of classical myth, but nothing from religious sources.

These Franticks are both the inverse of the four furies leading to Divine Order as described in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and also the early states of chaos that Orpheus had civilized according to classical myths derived from humanist texts.²⁷ When Orpheus tells Mania, “for Jove into our music will inspire / The power of passion, that their thoughts shall bend / To any form or motion we intend” (74), Campion is drawing on material widely disseminated by writers such as George Puttenham, who describes Orpheus’s power to civilize “rude and sauage people” in his *Arte of English Poesie*:

Orpheus assembled the wilde beasts to come in heardes to harken to his musicke, and by that meanes made them tame, implying thereby, how by his discreete and wholesome lesons vttered in harmonie and with melodious instruments he brought the rude and sauage people to a more ciuill and orderly life.²⁸

Echoing Puttenham, Campion’s Orpheus states that the music which once tamed wild beasts will do the same here, making “Frantics bow.”²⁹

Ultimately, however, Jove, here a representation of King James I, is the figure behind Orpheus. He has commanded the masque and the freeing of poetic frenzy on which its creation depends, even at the risk of allowing other frenzies, the “franticks,” out into the world because he is confident that they can be restrained by his will: “their thoughts shall bend to any motion or form we intend” (90). This reordering of their thoughts will come about when “Jove into our musick will

²⁶ Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (see note 17), 384.

²⁷ DeNeef, “Structure and Theme” (see note 20), 97.

²⁸ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie. Contruiued into three Bookes: The first of Poets and Poesie, the second of Proportion, the third of Ornament* (Richard Field, dwelling in the black-Friers, neere Ludgate, 1589), Bk. 1, ch. 3, available online at http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1504035&pageno=1 (last accessed on March 18, 2014).

²⁹ DeNeef, “Structure and Theme” (see note 20), 98.

inspire / the power of passion,” or when, in other words, the insane are cured by music (90). Campion’s belief in the power of music to cure madness comes not only out of the mythological material but also from a large body of medical texts going back to physicians such as the Roman Aulus Cornelius Celsus (25 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) in *De medicina* and philosophers like Martianus Capella (fifth century C.E.) in *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, who had prescribed music to calm the mind. Calm music continued to be recommended as a treatment for both melancholic and manic patients by later writers such as Bartholomew Anglicus and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), who attributed the first curing of madness through music to Pythagoras.³⁰ In a letter to Boëthius (480–524 or 525), Cassiodorus (480–573) describes quite clearly the way music heals not only physical ailments, but also mental illnesses:

The artist changes men’s hearts as they listen; . . . Harmful melancholy he turns to pleasure; he weakens swelling rage; he makes bloodthirsty cruelty kindly, arouses sleepy sloth from its torpor, restores to the sleepless their wholesome rest, recalls lust–corrupted chastity to its moral resolve, and heals boredom of spirit which is always the enemy of good thoughts. Dangerous hatreds he turns to helpful goodwill, and, in a blessed kind of healing, drives out the passions of the heart by means of sweetest pleasures.³¹

Furthermore, the healing power of music was frequently asserted by contemporaries of Campion, such as Sir John Davies (1569–1626), who calls music “the sick minds Leach” in a 1596 poem whose title metaphorically links music, poetry, and dance, “Orchestra: or, a Poem of Dancing.” In addition, Davies also points to the power of the ordering principles of music to reshape the “misrule” of the masquers as they dance:

While with those Maskers wantonly she [Music] plays;
Yet in this misrule, they such rule embrace
As two at once encomber not the place.³²

30 David Whitwell, “On Early Accounts of Music Therapy,” *Essays on the Origins of Western Music* 33, 3–4, online at <http://www.whitwellessays.com/> (last accessed on March 19, 2014). [Also see for discussions on the healing nature of music Neely, “Documents in Madness” (see note 1), 337, and Stephen Harper, *Insanity, Individuals and Society in Late–Medieval English Literature: The Subject of Madness*, Studies in Mediaeval Literature, 26 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 72.

31 Cassiodorus, *The Letters of Cassiodorus, Being a Condensed Translation of the Variae Epistolae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator*, trans. Thomas Hodgkin (London: H. Frowde, 1886), vol. 2, 40; here quoted in Whitwell (see note 30), 6–7.

32 John Davies, “Orchestra: or, a Poem of Dancing,” stanzas 46–47 available online at <http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/davies1.html> (last accessed on March 19, 2014).

Shakespeare, too, frequently refers to the healing properties of music, as, for example, in Hamlet’s response to his mother in the eponymous play that his temperament is like “healthful music. It is not madness” (3.4.141).³³ Clearly Campion had available a wide body of historical, medical, and mythological sources, as well as those from contemporary popular culture, to affirm the power that the ordering principle of music has to calm or heal the mind.

Campion’s Antimasque

When we look in greater detail at the actual script for the antimasque in *The Lords’ Masque*, the scene begins with Mania, called the goddess of madness, being told to free one of those she keeps hidden in a cave, a place of darkness that reflects the ancient Greek concept of madness as darkness or blackness of the mind.³⁴ Although Jove has commanded her to let out only Entheus, “poetic fury,” whose savage rage is exempt from vulgar censure, twelve other “franticks” escape with him and dance in such a way as to reflect frenzy in motion. The descriptions of Mania and the twelve “franticks,” a term frequently used in legal courts at this time to refer to the insane, are drawn from the popular secular views of madness at that time.³⁵ Campion describes them entering to strange music:

six men and six women, all presented in sundry habits and humours. There was the lover, the self-lover, the melancholic—man full of fear, the school-man, overcome with fantasy, the over-watched usurer, with others that made an absolute medley of madness. (90, 30–37)

Then while a “loud phantasticke tune” sounds, the figures dance a “madde measure” until finally a “very solemne ayre” calms them and they depart (90, 37–39). Missing from Campion’s representations of specific types of insanity are the more fantastic or unusual, such as those suffering from lycanthropy or hydrophobia (mad dog disease, rabies), Bedlam beggars, or St. Vitus’s dancers, all

³³ William Shakespeare, “Hamlet,” *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. Gwynne Blakemore Evans and John Joseph Michael Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 1217. Other quotations from Shakespeare’s plays will also come from this edition.

³⁴ Natsu Hattori, “‘The Pleasure of your Bedlam’: the Theatre of Madness in the Renaissance,” *History of Psychiatry* 6 (1995): 283–308; here 291.

³⁵ A. Fessler, “The Management of Lunacy in Seventeenth-Century England. An Investigation of Quarter-Session Records,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 49 (1956): 901–907, quoted from Hattori, “‘The Pleasure of your Bedlam’” (see note 34), 285.

of whom frequently appear in other works of the time, such as John Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy*.³⁶

Instead, Campion's figures seem to resemble people, according to contemporary accounts, seen at King James's court. Later in James's reign, a widely read verse adapted from "From a gypsy in the morning" sung in another court masque, Ben Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, clearly echoes the call Campion makes here to cleanse the court:

And just God I humblie pray
That thou wilt take the Filme away
That keepe my Soveraignes eyes from vieweing
The things that wilbe our undoeing
.....
And noe doubt his royall nose
Will quickly Smell those rascalls forth
Whose blacke deeds have ecclips't his worth.
These found, and scourg'd for their offences
Heavens blesse my Soveraigne, and his sences. (65–78)³⁷

As we see in the poem, others were also calling for the king to recognize that the actions of those closest to him are endangering the monarchy and, by extension, the country, and then to purge these from his court. Finally, during James's reign Burton shows his contempt for the behavior in royal courts when he denounces the life of a courtier as "a gallimaufry of ambition, lust, fraud, imposture, dissimulation, detraction, envy pride" (244).

Campion begins his indictment of court figures by first introducing the **mad lover** in his list of franticks "presented in sundry habits and humours," and the type of mad love most frequently cited in works like Bartholomus's popular late medieval work is erotomania.³⁸ Burton confirms this view in his "anatomy" when he says

That lovers are mad, I think no man will deny. . . . love is madness, a hell, an incurable disease; . . . Seneca calls it, an impotent and raging lust. I shall dilate this subject apart; in the meantime let lovers sigh out the rest. (96)

³⁶ John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore and Other Plays*, ed. Marion Lomax (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1–80.

³⁷ "From such a face whose Excellence," *Early Stuart Libels: an Edition of Poetry from Manuscript Sources*, ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae. Early Modern Literary Studies Text Series, 1 (2005), L8, online at http://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/king_and_favorite_section/L8.html (last accessed on March 19, 2014).

³⁸ Harper, *Insanity, Individuals and Society* (see note 30), 55.

Campion’s mad lover might have had many friends in the Jacobean court. James himself did not control his affections for his favorite young men, such as Robert Carr, later the Earl of Somerset, and George Villiers, later Duke of Buckingham, said to be the greatest love of his life. “He toyed constantly in public with his own codpiece, fondled his lovers openly, nibbled their cheeks, and wrote passionate love letters to them.”³⁹ A visitor to Whitehall was shocked at what he saw: “. . . I never yet saw any fond husband make so much or so great dalliance over his beautiful spouse as I have seen King James over his favourites. . . .”⁴⁰ The king’s passion for his favorites was noted across Europe by diplomats such as Monsieur Tillières, the French ambassador, who said his favorites were not chosen on the basis of any talent or skill, “but the king simply always allowed himself to be carried away by his passion.”⁴¹ Since dance itself was often attacked by moralists of the age as a means to display young bodies and to incite lustful thoughts, the courtiers performing as dancers in these masques could have created an erotic atmosphere through their bodily movements and facial expressions. Campion seems to be aware of the possibilities of salacious suggestions when, as discussed earlier, he instructs the male dancers to remember their solemn roles. We might add that, if they did not maintain their dignity and virtue, they would look like the frantick dancers banished from court in the antimasque. Douglas Lanier notes that the masques written after 1611, now only for the king, no longer for the queen, are performed in an atmosphere of homoerotic tension, and with his well-known homoerotic attachments to his courtiers, such as Robert Carr and later George Villiers, the king’s attention was focused on the bodies of his young male courtiers.⁴²

However, sexual scandal also included on occasion women at James’s court, and Carr was at the center of the biggest scandal. While married to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Lady Frances Howard began an affair with the king’s favorite Robert Carr and initially tried magical spells to keep Devereux from insisting on having marital relations with her. Then she sued for divorce on the grounds that he was impotent and she was still a virgin, which a test of a veiled woman miraculously proved. High figures from court, law, and the church were all involved at one time or another, and both Carr and Lady Frances were later

³⁹ Alvin Kernan, *The King’s Playwright: Theater in the Stuart Court, 1603–1613* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 118.

⁴⁰ Kernan, *The King’s Playwright* (see note 39), 119–120.

⁴¹ Leslie Carroll, *Royal Affairs: A Lusty Romp Through the Extramarital Adventures That Rocked the British Monarchy* (New York: New American Library, 2008), 181.

⁴² Douglas Lanier, “Fertile Visions: Jacobean Revels and the Erotics of Occasion,” *Studies in English Literature* 39.2 (1999): 327–56; here 331–35.

convicted of poisoning a friend and advisor of Carr's, Thomas Overbury, because he tried to prevent them from marrying. The scandal caused so much public anger that, after Lady Howard's death sentence was commuted by James, a gang of angry Londoners attacked a carriage mistakenly thought to carry her and her mother.

A poem at the time shows the popular view of Carr as someone "of pride, luste, avarice, & wretched hate / Which in fewe yeares dismembred Englands state" (43–44).⁴³ Interestingly enough, Campion was commissioned to write the wedding masque for their eventual marriage (*Somerset Masque* 1613), and later was unwittingly used to convey money needed to replace the honorable Lord Lieutenant of the Tower with the one who turned a blind eye when a jailer poisoned Overbury. Obviously, Campion had plenty of opportunities to observe the conduct of James's courtiers up close.

The second frantick explicitly named by Campion is the **self lover**, probably also not in short supply at court. This mad figure appears in literature throughout the early modern period: Shakespeare's character Malvolio from *Twelfth Night* (1600 or 1601), described as "sick of [from] self-love" (1.5.77), is a narcissist who cannot differentiate grandiose delusions from reality and, as a result, is eventually locked up in a dark cellar as a madman. John Ford's play written a decade later, *The Lover's Melancholy* (1627), a work no doubt influenced by Campion's antimasque and, thus, perhaps using similar figures, portrays in its Masque of Melancholy an insane female character described in this way: "Sprung from ambition first and singularity, / Self-love, and blind opinion of true merit . . . Pride is the ground on't."⁴⁴ When Burton concludes that "proud and vainglorious persons are certainly mad" (98), he might have George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in mind, whose mother had him trained in France to star at James's court. Called the most handsome man in the realm, he had "his breath sweetened, his hair curled, his ribbons carefully tied, his walk coached."⁴⁵ In an epitaph from the time on Sir Walter Raleigh, the latter is said to be the "antithesis of the fawning effeminate favourite," referring to Villiers.⁴⁶ One historian has characterized him in this way: "Fearless, confident, and entirely self-centred, he never dreamed of doubting his own supreme capacity as a statesman and as a soldier; though

⁴³ "Some would complaine of Fortune & blinde chance," *Early Stuart Libels* (see note 37), K1i.

⁴⁴ John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore and Other Plays* (see note 36), 50.

⁴⁵ Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright* (see note 39), 118.

⁴⁶ Siobhan C. Keenan, "Staging Roman History, Stuart Politics, and the Duke of Buckingham: The Example of The Emperor's Favourite," *Early Theatre: A Journal Associated with the Records of Early English Drama* 14.2 (2011): 63–103; here 67.

politics in his eyes meant the punishment of people who had offended him.”⁴⁷ Eventually given the power by James to control all royal patronage, Villiers felt no need to hide his vanity and pride, even once making Sir Francis Bacon crawl on his knees to beg forgiveness of him, which helped fuel the popular contempt for him that resulted in two bills of impeachment being introduced against him in Parliament and his eventual murder.

The next figure introduced in the antimasque, “the **melancholic-man full of fear**,” brings to mind characters like Hamlet, deeply depressed by the corruption around him at court, or men like John Donne, who in a letter to Henry Goodyer in 1608 described his sick soul and diseased mind as a depression that “hang[s] leads at my heels.”⁴⁸ Although John Donne truly suffered from melancholy, or depression, for many others at this time melancholy was the fashionable way to prove themselves members of an aristocratic group of deep thinkers. In the writings of Ficino popular all over Europe, melancholy was identified with genius because the inevitable failure of the thinking mind to achieve knowledge of the divine led naturally to depression.⁴⁹ Since *melancholia* had come “to signify great depth, soulfulness, complexity, and even genius,” there is little doubt that James’s court saw its fair share of brooding young men like the parody of the depressed courtier Jacques, in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, who cries during a royal hunt over a wounded deer.⁵⁰ Paintings of young aristocratic men lounging under trees deep in melancholic thought are common. One of the most famous is the miniature portrait known as *A Young Man Seated Under a Tree* painted in watercolor on vellum laid on card by Isaac Oliver ca. 1595. In this painting, a melancholy courtier dressed predominantly in black with a forlorn expression and discarded glove has chosen solitude over the fellowship of court seen in the background of the painting (see Fig. 1).

⁴⁷ Arthur D. Innes, *A History of the British Nation from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1912), available online at <http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Stuart-History-of-Britain.htm> (last accessed on Oct. 20, 2013).

⁴⁸ John Donne, *John Donne*, ed. John Carey. Oxford Authors (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 156–57. See also Raymond G. Siemens, “‘I haue often such a sickly inclination’: Biography and the Critical Interpretation of Donne’s Suicide Tract, *Biathanatos*,” *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 7 (2001): 1–26; here 5, available online at <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/si-07/siemens.htm> (last accessed on Oct. 20, 2013).

⁴⁹ Andrew Solomon, *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 295.

⁵⁰ Solomon, *The Noonday Demon* (see note 49), 300.



Fig. 1: *A Young Man Seated Under a Tree* by Isaac Oliver ca. 1595; Royal Collection Trust



Fig. 2: *To this grave doctor millions do resort* by Martin Droeshout; The British Museum

Other illustrations of the melancholy courtier from the period are less flattering, such as that in a satirical broadside on the folly and madness rampant in Jacobean England entitled *To this grave doctor millions do resort* (see Fig. 2). In apothecary shop shown in this etching by Martin Droeshout in the 1620s, a melancholic young courtier has his head placed inside a furnace so that his idle pastimes will go up in a cloud of smoke. Among the items billowing up from the furnace are tobacco pipes, cards, tennis rackets, musical instruments, a dressed monkey, and masks.

Campion names the fourth madman the “**school-man, overcome with fantasy**,” another figure known at the time to be prone to insanity. As early as the Bible, where Paul’s previous learning is equated with madness (Acts 26:24), and attested to in the late medieval period by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, too much

study was said to divert the mind from the reality of experience.⁵¹ In an explanation of the connection drawn between the two in the period, Foucault says, “. . . knowledge is absurd . . . learning becomes madness through the very excess of false learning.”⁵² Although no longer living at the point, John Leland serves as the best example of an early modern scholar who goes mad from the pressure of undertaking a project requiring years of work. After promising to write an impossibly massive work of many volumes to cover the geopolitical history, geography, literary history, and local history of Britain for Henry VIII, he sadly goes insane from the weight of the project and is described by a contemporary as “in such a frenesy at thys present, that lytle hope I have of hys recover, wherby he myght fynyshe such thynges as he began.”⁵³ In Robert Burton’s view, scholars suffer from melancholy partly because they devote themselves totally to their studies and take little care of themselves, but also because most of them are servile and poor: “For being as they are, their Rhetorick only serves them to curse their bad fortunes” (265). He then explains that they

complain pitfully, and lay open their wants to their respectless Patrons . . . and, which is too common in those Dedicatory Epistles, for hope of gain, to lie, flatter, and with hyperbolical eulogiums and commendations to magnify and extol an illiterate unworthy idiot for his excellent virtues. . . . They prostitute themselves . . . to serve great men’s turns for a small reward. (265)

Among many other scholars and writers who had to prostitute themselves to flatter great men and women, John Donne, mentioned earlier, who struggled in poverty for thirteen years after he had been rejected at court because of an imprudent marriage, leaves a large body of poetry and letters written to or for wealthy courtiers either pleading for help to support his family or laying out extravagant praise for the recipient, hoping to receive a large gift of money in return. He explains in one of many letters written to his patron Sir Henry Goodyer that unlike diseases of the soul and body which have cures, “of the diseases of the mind there is no criterion, no canon, no rule . . . [I] reduce to my thoughts my fortunes, my years, the duties of a man, of a friend, of a husband, of a father, and all the incumbencies of a family.”⁵⁴ Elsewhere he laments the differences in their

51 Harper, *Insanity, Individuals and Society* (see note 30), 51.

52 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 37.

53 James Simpson, *The Oxford English Literary History. 1350–1547: Reform and Cultural Revolution*. *Oxford English Literary History*, 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16.

54 Donne, *John Donne* (see note 49), 156–57.

status because he is not accepted at court, saying “For you living at Court without ambition, which would burn you, or envy, which would divest others, live in the sun, not in the fire: and I which live in the country without stupefying, am not in darkness, but in shadow.” In another letter he calls Goodyer’s attention to how desperate his situation is:

With me, Sir, it is thus. There is not one person (beside myself) in my house well. I have already lost half a child, and with that mischance of hers, my wife fallen into a disposition, which would afflict her much, but that the sickness of her children stupefies her . . . If God should ease us with burials, I know not well how to perform even that.⁵⁵

In his poetry written for patrons, he lavishes on them excessive praise, such as in the verse narrative “To the Countess of Huntingdon,” where Donne describes the countess as virtue on earth, the woman “from [whom] all virtues flow” (45) and thus, he says, he owes her “some tribute” (48), but not flattery because her glorious traits are “above all flattery”(58).⁵⁶ Of course, he had previously written to the Countess of Bedford that she was “virtue’s temple” (44) in a verse letter entitled “To the Countess of Bedford,” while also telling her that she has refined him by introducing him to the “worthiest things / (Virtue, art, beauty, fortune)” (1–2).⁵⁷ As a leading court figure, a favorite lady-in-waiting of Queen Anne, Lucy, Countess of Bedford could have been a valuable patron for Donne, as we can see from the nine verse letters he addressed to her in addition to three elegies written for her. However, after he changed his religion from Catholicism to Anglicanism to take up the only position King James I would ever approve for him, that of royal chaplain, priest, and later Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, an act he had refused for years to do, Donne laments in a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (1614), after begging Goodyer to burn it, that after agreeing earlier to pay his debts, the countess has chastised him and sent him only £30, which means that he “must use more friends than I thought I should have needed.”⁵⁸ It is easy to understand how someone like Donne who had tried to live a principled life and was repeatedly praised during his lifetime for his intellect, could fall into a bitter depression when he sees no worthy way to support his family. Ultimately, this explains why he wrote *Biathanatos* (1608), a justification of suicide.

We should not discuss scholars at James’s court without noting that one of James’s consistent views of himself was as a brilliant scholar, and he did know

⁵⁵ Donne, *John Donne* (see note 49), 189–90, 250.

⁵⁶ Donne, *John Donne* (see note 49), 198–200.

⁵⁷ Donne, *John Donne* (see note 49), 152–54.

⁵⁸ Donne, *John Donne* (see note 49), 259.

several languages and write books on monarch's rights and responsibility, such as *Baskilikon Doron* (1599 in Scotland and reprinted 1603 in London), and on theology, the most well-known being *Demonologie* (1596 in Scotland and reprinted in 1603 in London), which proves the existence of Satan and witches.⁵⁹ He took such faith in his own scholarly abilities that when the archbishop of Canterbury refused to annul the marriage of Frances Howard to Essex on the grounds that witchcraft had made Essex impotent, the scandal discussed earlier, an angry James wrote the archbishop that his theology was in error and that he should read *Demonologie* and rely less on the Bible.⁶⁰

When we turn to the fifth and last of the figures given a specific name in the antimasque, we see “**the over-watched usurer**,” those who Burton attests “amongst others, are most mad, they have all the symptoms of melancholy, fear, sadness, suspicion, &c” (98). Possessed by an insatiable desire to gain, the covetous man, which for Burton includes the usurer, was seen as a weary wretch unable to sleep, never satisfied, and always suspicious, fearful, and distrustful, someone who could be found to be awake at midnight pouring over his counts and talking only of his money (244–48). Despite the attention given to the ideal of service to the prince in humanist literature, courtiers were notorious for their greed, “a Courtier: a parasite,” says Burton (241). In their world, overspending was absolutely necessary to maintain prestige, and the traditional wealth of aristocratic families—their land—did not easily transfer into the cash needed to purchase the homes, clothing, entertainment, servants and many other things necessary to play the role with success. Those desperate for cash turned for the first time to money lenders, usurers who demanded 10 to 12 percent on very short-term loans.⁶¹

King James himself might have needed the services of a usurer since Parliament repeatedly refused to increase his revenue to pay for his extravagant expenses. Quite incapable of controlling spending, James thought the wealth of his English kingdom was bottomless and ignored all of the financial advice of his better advisors and fought repeatedly with Parliament over his income, finally shutting down Parliament for years at a time. His patronage of offices to courtiers eventually cost £350,000 out of a total government income of £618,000; the cost

⁵⁹ Both works are available on-line at Luminarium. See *The Works of James I* at <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/james/jamesbib.htm> or (Robert Walde-graue, 1597), available as e-book at http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=845529 (last accessed on March 19, 2014).

⁶⁰ Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright* (see note 39), 5.

⁶¹ Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright* (see note 39), 139.

to feed his guests ran to £80,000 a year; and he eventually gave away close to a quarter of all royal estates.⁶² For this particular marriage, James spent £50,000 on the festivities for the wedding and £40,000 for his daughter’s dowry; Elizabeth’s dress and jewels were valued at £400,000, and James himself was covered that day in jewels worth £600,000.⁶³ With no help from Parliament, he resorted to selling monopolies for goods and services and collecting fees for new titles, eventually doubling the number of English peers.⁶⁴ A popular song during James’s reign ends with these lines that summarize the way things worked at his court:

And as the kinge gives way, each one pretends
to honor him, though out of private endes.
Thus swarmes the Courte with youthfull gallants brave
and happie he, who can the kinges love have.⁶⁵

According to Alastair Bellany, by May, 1612, the royal crown debt had grown to £500,000 and only continued to expand every year after that.⁶⁶

Both Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences had seen many types of creatures dance across the stage in masques and antimasques—satyrs, murderers, witches, classical monsters, and the like—but here the danger to society that James must control is figured as insanity. These “franticks,” reflecting the use of madness as a vehicle of satire, serve the same purpose as do the mad characters found on the Renaissance stage in general, which Hattori argues, is to “serve as a mirror for the generalized insanity or folly of the rest of the world in the play . . . , exposing the hypocrisy of the sane.”⁶⁷ Like the stinging satire of the licensed fool who is free to speak his mind, the criticism of a society reflected in the madness of its inhabitants is expressed in subtle comparisons. Although Lindley has suggested that another masque of Campion’s, *Lord Hay’s Masque*, and Shirley’s *Triumph of Peace* are somewhat critical of James’s court or politics, he doesn’t see the *Lord’s Masque* as critical of Jacobean culture in its social behaviors, financial policies, or political doctrine.⁶⁸ Lindley argues instead that the discord shown by the dance

62 Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King’s Playwright* (see note 39), 126–28.

63 Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King’s Playwright* (see note 39), 153–54.

64 Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King’s Playwright* (see note 39), 127.

65 “Fortunes wheele. or Rota fortunæ in gyro,” *Early Stuart Libels* (see note 37), K1i.

66 Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603–1660*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

67 Hattori, ““The pleasure of your Bedlam”” (see note 34), 301–02.

68 Lindley, *The Court Masque* (see note 3), 8, 204–05.

of the “franticks” signifies the chaos that would tear Europe apart if the extreme religious fanatics of the day had their way.⁶⁹

Although James deeply feared the chaos of warfare, his motto, after all, being *Beati Pacifici*, this interpretation does not take into account the fact that these actors represent carefully differentiated types of insanity linked to social behaviors, not to religious or political extremism. Lindley is right to see the masque proper as a celebration of the accord brought about by the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Protestant Frederick envisioned for Europe, but surely the intent behind the antimasque is to encourage James to consider the effects of discord at home, not praise for maintaining the religious and political balance in Europe. Campion’s uneasiness with the concept that a masque performed by the English court could be envisioned as anything like an earthly shadow of divine harmony as described in Platonic myth led him, I believe, to demonstrate the need to rid the court of sordid behavior before the balanced world mirroring musical harmony promised by the wedding of two young people could come about.

James, as King James VI of Scotland, had privately published as mentioned earlier seven copies of the book of advice for his son, *Basilikon Doron* or *His Majesties Instrvctions To His Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* in 1599, but he had it republished in 1603 in London to display for his new country, in the guise of advice to his son, his intellectual abilities, political savvy, and ethical ideals, making use of the way, as he says, that a monarch’s “writes will remaine as true pictures of [his] minde, to all posterities.”⁷⁰ Here he envisions an ideal court where the king models a virtuous example for others to follow:

But it is not enough to a good King, by the scepter of good Lawes well execute to gouverne, and by force of armes to protect his people; if he ioyned not therewith his vertuous life in his owne person, and in the person of his Court and company; by good example alluring his Subjects to the loue of vertue, and hatred of vice. (29)

He then goes on to explain how a good king must watch over his court to ensure that the

Court and companie to bee a patterne of godlinesse and all honest vertues, to all the rest of the people. . . . And shortly, maintaine peace in your Court, bannish enuie, cherish modestie, bannish deboshed insolence, foster humilitie, and repress pride. (33)

⁶⁹ Lindley, *The Court Masque* (see note 3), 207.

⁷⁰ King James I, *James I's Basilikon Doron*, 48. Available online at Luminarium: http://www.stoics.com/basilikon_doron.html (last accessed on March 19, 2014). All citations will be to this version.

A number of the behaviors said in this passage to cause trouble at court are repeatedly cited at his English court throughout his reign, especially envy, pride, lust, and vanity. Like the poems and songs noted here earlier, there are a very large number of texts extant that show the country’s dismay over the sordid behavior that James allowed to taint his court, among them private letters, public documents, and popular entertainment of the time.⁷¹ Ironically, James also warns his son to choose those who receive money very carefully “for this ouersight hath beene the greatest cause of my mis–thriuing in money matters” (32), recognizing in his earlier affairs the same mistakes that he will again make in England. He also seems to understand the importance of wisely and carefully rewarding and bestowing gifts on his courtiers: with “proportionall discretion, that euery man may be serued according to his measure,” because otherwise “Liberalitie would decline to Prodigalitie, in helping others with your, and your successours hurt” (42). Finally, he also warns his son to avoid flatterers, “the pest of all Princes, and wracke of Republicks” (32). We can see, therefore, that James understood in theory how important it was for a monarch not only to set a virtuous example for his people through his own behavior, but also to reign in the excesses of those in his court. Although he might have wanted his son to do so, he ironically paid little attention to the precepts he prescribes in *Basilikon Doran* later when he served as king of England, instead employing the book only as propaganda to enhance his reputation as a statesman. Instead of being “a patterne of godlinesse and all honest vertues,” his court was, in the words of one historian,

... a shabby place of epicures, perverts, thieves, beggars, quarrelers, and sycophants. . . . A doting king playing with himself and his minions in public, young men of good families prostituting themselves to get ahead, the peers and great ones of the realm falling down drunk, rioting, gambling, and whoring their substance away. Sneak thieves stole fortunes . . . while virtue was made a laughingstock.⁷²

In conclusion, David Lindley describes the problem facing an artist who wished to display ideals in court during the early seventeenth century as an inability to connect these ideal images to any actuality given the obvious disparity between them and the degenerate reality at hand.⁷³ In this culture, where the previous idealization of a virgin queen by her followers is now dismissed as quaint and naive,

⁷¹ See for an excellent analysis of these, Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire and the Early English State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), as well as the online site he co–edits, *Early Stuart Libels* (see note 37).

⁷² Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King’s Playwright* (see note 39), 120.

⁷³ Lindley, *Thomas Champion* (see note 22), 203.

Campion tried to project a neo-platonic vision through music, poetry, and dance that would encourage James to lead the court to higher thoughts and actions, the same goal that Burton later says compelled him to write his *Anatomy of Melancholy*:

I had a just cause to undertake this subject . . . that so men might acknowledge their imperfections, and seek to reform what is amiss. (101)

It is doubtful that Campion's message was even understood at the time, however; the only recorded comment on this masque says there was "no great commendation save only for riches, their devices being long and tedious."⁷⁴ In a genre said to be "the last expression of full-blown Renaissance idealism," Campion shows a nostalgic desire for that past when the Fairy Queen, as Elizabeth I was often called, danced with grace and moderation for her handsome courtiers daily and just as carefully orchestrated and regulated their behavior in her court, not tolerating displays of immoderate thoughts, mad behavior, unrestrained ambition, passion, and ego, the exact traits exhibited by the mad figures in the anti-masque.⁷⁵ James's focus, on the other hand, was usually somewhere beyond the confines of his court, most often, if we believe his critics, on his next hunting trip with his favorites.

⁷⁴ Campion, *Campion's Works* (see note 2), xli-xlii.

⁷⁵ Lindley, *Thomas Champion* (see note 22), 13.

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Order in Insanity: Eva Margaretha Frölich (d. 1692) and her National Swedish Eschatology

*Men, even madmen, do not simply invent their world. The materials they employ for its construction are, by and large, public property.*¹

One of the most interesting women to appear on the Swedish cultural and political scene in the late seventeenth century is Eva Margaretha Frölich.² While she is now almost completely forgotten, she received among her contemporaries a good deal of attention, which was almost exclusively very negative, however. Her mental state was questioned, and it was claimed that she was insane.

In Christian Franz Paullini's *Das Hoch- und Wohl-gelahrte Teutsche Frauenzimmer* (1705, 1712), one of the very popular early modern encyclopedias about

1 Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, vol. 1: *Education of the Senses* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 12.

2 Works on Eva Margaretha Frölich are, for example, Johannes Kirschfeldt, "Eva Margaretha Frölich: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchengeschichte des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 101 (1929): 205–32, Pentti Laasonen, "Spiritualistiset traktaatit kolmen vuosisadan takaa," *Album amicorum : kirja- ja kulttuurihistoriallisia tutkielmia Eeva Mäkelä-Henrikssonille* 29.7.1986. Helsingin yliopiston kirjaston julkaisu, 50 (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto, 1986), 112–17, Bo Andersson, "Eva Margaretha Frölich und ihre Schriften: Ein aufgefundener Sammelband," *Wolfenbütteler Barock-Nachrichten* 14 (1987): 71–76; id., *Die fröliche Botschaft einer tausendjährigen Prophetin: Einige ideengeschichtliche und rhetorische Bemerkungen zu Eva Margaretha Frölichs Traktat Eine Wahrhaftige PROPHECEYUNG / Und außlegung über 2 Pet. Cap. 3 (1686)*. Schriften des deutschen Instituts der Universität Stockholm, 20 (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, Tyska institutionen, 1990); id., "Eva Margaretha Frölich: Nationell eskatalogi och profetisk auktoritet," *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* [91] (1991): 57–81, id., "Die Autorität der Prophetin: Eva Margaretha Frölich und der theologische Diskurs," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 17 (1991): 9–35; id., "The German-Swedish Prophetess Eva Margaretha Frölich († 1692) and Her National Eschatology," *Lutheran Quarterly*, n.s. 6 (1992): 175–86, id., "Jacob Bemens Duyvels Boeken: Eva Margaretha Frölichs Auseinandersetzung mit Jacob Böhme," *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Jan Garewicz and Alois Maria Haas. Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung, 24 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 223–44; id., "Female Writing in Manuscript and Print: Two German Examples from the Cultural and Political Context of Late Seventeenth-Century Sweden—Maria Aurora von Königsmarck (1662–1728) and Eva Margaretha Frölich (?–1692)," *Studia Neophilologica* 86 (2014) [forthcoming]. Archival sources concerning Eva Margaretha Frölich can be found in Riksarkivet, Stockholm and Stockholms Stadsarkiv (see below note 14).

learned women, we find the remark that she was certainly a learned and well-read woman, but also a very strange Anabaptist, who had delusions about the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ.³ Paulini writes:

Frölichin (Eva Margret) / eine zwar gelehrte / wohlbelesene Weibs-Person / aber wunder-seltzame Wiedertäufferin. Was vor Grillen hatte sie vom tausendjährigen Reich Christi

[Frölichin (Eva Margret), certainly a learned and well-read woman, but also a very strange Anabaptist. What kind of delusions did she have about the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ].⁴

A contemporary theologian, Johann Heinrich Feustking, the author of *GYNAECUM HAERETICO FANATICUM*, perhaps the most severe early modern attack on independent female spirituality, seems somewhat sorry for Eva Margaretha Frölich.⁵ According to him, one could actually feel an earnest pity for her:

Darum man über die rasende Thorheit dieses Weibes ein ernstliches Mitleyden haben mag
[Therefore you can have an earnest pity for the raving madness of this woman].⁶

It must be borne in mind, however, that accusing someone—especially a woman—of being insane is a common early modern strategy of theological disqualification.⁷

³ For information on the physician and theologian Christian Franz Paullini, see Franz Xaver von Wegele, "Paullini, Franz Christian," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 25 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1887), 279–81.

⁴ Quoted according to Elisabeth Gössman, ed., *Eva Gottes Meisterwerk*. Archiv für philosophie- und theologiegeschichtliche Frauenforschung, 2 (Munich: iudicium, 1985), 179.

⁵ For information on Johann Heinrich Feustking and his work, see the preface (by Elisabeth Gössmann) and the introduction (by Ruth Albrecht) to Johann Heinrich Feustking, *GYNAECUM HAERETICO FANATICUM* [...] [Reprint of the edition Frankfurt and Leipzig 1704]. Archiv für philosophie- und theologiegeschichtliche Frauenforschung, 7 (Munich: iudicium, 1998): VII–XVI, XVII–XLIII.

⁶ Johann Heinrich Feustking, *GYNAECUM HAERETICO FANATICUM, Oder Historie und Beschreibung Der falschen Prophetinnen / Quäckerinnen / Schwärmerinnen / und andern sectirischen und begeisterten Weibes=Personen* [. . .] (Frankfurt a. M. and Leipzig: Gottfried Zimmermanns Buchladen, 1704) [Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich: H. eccl. 352], 303.

⁷ See, for example, Truman Guy Steffen, "The Social Argument Against Enthusiasm (1650–1660)," *Studies in English* [21] (1941): 39–63; George Rosen, "Enthusiasm: A Dark Lanthorn of the Spirit," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 42 (1968): 393–421; John F. Sena, "Melancholic Madness and the Puritans," *Harvard Theological Review* 66, (1973): 293–309; and Michael Heyd, "Be Sober and Reasonable": *The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 63 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1995).

In this paper, I will discuss Eva Margeratha Frölich and her national Swedish eschatology. Many of her contemporaries claimed that she was insane; I have already quoted two such voices.⁸ But we also have to consider the possibility that her notion of a national Swedish eschatology might have made some sense in its historical context. Is there perhaps an unexpected order in her insanity? This is the question I intend to explore further.

First, however, I would like to give a brief overview of Eva Margaretha Frölich's biography.

Eva Margaretha Frölich belonged to an Austrian Protestant noble family.⁹ Her father, Hans Christoffer Frölich, had entered Swedish military service during the Thirty Years' War. His daughter Eva Margaretha was born in Mecklenburg, probably on one of the estates owned by the family of her mother. The date of her birth is unknown.

From 1670 on, Eva Margaretha Frölich lived in Riga, besides Stockholm the commercially most important city of the Swedish Empire.¹⁰ There, she became acquainted with a goldsmith by the name of Bernd Dörchmann. They both dis-

For the female perspective, see, for example, Claudia Wustmann, *Die "begeisterten Mägde": Mitteldeutsche Prophetinnen im Radikalpietismus am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig and Berlin: Kirchhof & Franke, 2008).

8 More statements of this kind can be found in Andersson, *Die fröhliche Botschaft* (see note 2), 7–10. The only contemporary who seems to show a certain kind of understanding is Philipp Jacob Spener, the founder of German Pietism: "Die gute Frölichin dauert mich auch / wo ich an sie gedencke: vielleicht sollte ihr so gar schädlich nicht seyn / da sie / wie es verlautet / in einer *honesta custodia* in Holland wäre / und in einer einsamkeit eine weile gelassen sich besser zu begreifen anfinde" [I feel sorry for poor Mrs. Frölich, when I think about her. If, as has been reported, she is now in *honesta custodia* in Holland, it may not be so bad for her. There in her loneliness she can have a chance to be left in peace and to understand herself better], Philipp Jacob Spener, *Theologische Bedencken Und andere Brieffliche Antworten auf geistliche / sonderlich zur erbauung gerichtete materien [...]* Erster Teil (Halle a. d. S.: Verlag des Waysen=Hauses, 1712) [Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Ta 116], 325. Spener formulated this statement in 1686.

9 Information on the Frölich family can be found in Sven Grauers, "Frölich," *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, vol.16, ed. Erik Grill (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1964–1966), 629–30.

10 Riga became a part of Sweden in 1629 and was until the 1660s the largest city in the Swedish Empire. Riga was also intellectually very important because of its good connections to Western Europe, especially Amsterdam. For a short discussion of the "import" via Riga of radical religious ideas to the Swedish Empire, which was strongly dominated by Lutheran orthodoxy in the late seventeenth century, see Johannes Wallmann, "Beziehungen des frühen Pietismus zum Baltikum und Finnland," id., *Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Zeitalter des Barock: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 249–281; here 273–75.



Fig. 1: Engraving of King Charles XI of Sweden (1672–1697)¹¹

¹¹ Inventor: David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl, engraver: Jacob von Sandrat. The engraving belongs to the holdings of Uppsala universitetsbibliotek [internal ID: 14164].

covered having the same dreams and visions according to which the Swedish king Charles XI was elected to become the ruler of Christianity.¹² Eva Margaretha Frölich spent the rest of her life propagating this idea.¹³

In the fall of 1683, she wrote letters to Charles XI, went to Stockholm and was also received in audience.¹⁴ She took advantage of this opportunity and tried to convince the Swedish king of his future role in the imminent apocalyptic drama. The king, however, was unimpressed by her ideas and ordered the ministers in the Stockholm consistory to question her.¹⁵ Since she refused to recant her apocalyptic ideas, her claim of being a prophet, and her intense anticlericalism, she was later put under house arrest. The Stockholm pastors were ordered to try to persuade her to renounce her views.

12 Eva Margaretha Frölich's claim for prophethood is discussed in detail in Andersson, "Eva Margaretha Frölich: Nationell eskatologi och profetisk auktoritet," and id., "Die Autorität der Prophetin" (see note 2). She devoted a special tract to the question of her theological authority as a woman: *Mein und des Goldschmitz BERENDT DORCHMANS Predig-Ampt / wegen das EVANGELIUM, vom Reiche Christi aus der Bibel bewiesen. Nebenst warhafftige Propheceyung der vorstehenden Christenheit* [. . .]. (Amsterdam: published by the author, 1686) [Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm, Composite volume, Bibl rar]. For a good discussion of the argumentation for female theological authority in the late seventeenth century, see Ruth Albrecht, *Johanna Eleonora Petersen: Theologische Schriftstellerin des frühen Pietismus*. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus, 45 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 155–99.

13 For bibliographical information on her works, see Andersson, "Eva Margaretha Frölich und ihre Schriften" (see note 2).—Eva Margaretha Frölich's theological and chiliastic political thought belongs to the religious movement of radical pietism. For a discussion of this theological current, see, for example, "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte des Pietismus*, vol. 1: *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. Martin Brecht (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 391–437; and the contributions to *Der radikale Pietismus: Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. Wolfgang Breul, Marcus Meier, and Lothar Vogel. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus, 55. Second ed. (2010; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011). The best discussion of radical pietism in Sweden is still: Emanuel Linderholm, *Sven Rosén och hans insats i frihetstidens radikala pietism* (Uppsala and Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1911).

14 The letters are dated Oct. 10 and Oct. 29, 1683 (Biografica 20 (Frölich), Riksarkivet, Stockholm). Charles XI was the ruler of Sweden 1672–1697. In 1680 he introduced royal absolutism. For a biographical presentation, see Göran Rystad, *Karl XI: En biografi* (Lund: Historiska media, 2003).

15 There is a very interesting protocol from this interrogation, which took place in Dec. 7, 1683. It exists in two copies: one in Justitierevisionens utslagshandlingar, 12.12.1692, Band III, No. W. 300½, Riksarkivet, Stockholm, the other one in Stockholms domkapitel, Handlingar, Allmän serie, E III:32 (1684), Stockholms Stadsarkiv. For the content and the argumentation in this interrogation, see Andersson, "Die Autorität der Prophetin" (see note 2), 13–17.

In the middle of February 1684 they apparently succeeded, and she was set free.¹⁶ But after her release Eva Margaretha Frölich continued to propagate her theological and political views. In the fall of 1684 she was imprisoned and tried at the *Svea hovrätt*, the Svea Court of Appeal. Her case was discussed not only there, but also in the king's council.¹⁷ Different courses of action were debated; the death penalty and life imprisonment were suggested. Finally it was decided to exile her; her writings were publicly burned by the Stockholm executioner in December 1684.¹⁸

On one of the first days of 1685 Eva Margaretha Frölich arrived in Lübeck; traveling to Dresden she sought to persuade the elector, Johann Georg III, to join the Swedish forces in the planned march toward Jerusalem. She also attacked his bad sexual morals. The prince's response was to exile her from the Electorate of Saxony.¹⁹ She then decided to go to Amsterdam, the European center of radical religious activity, where she published a number of tracts in German and Dutch. On her house in Amsterdam she is said to have hung a sign with the following text: "Hier wohnt eine tausendjährige Prophetin / Welche heisset Eva Margaretha Frölichin" ["Here lives a chiliastic prophetess / whose name is Eva Margaretha Frölich"].²⁰

In 1692 she returned to Sweden, even though she must have known that her return necessarily would lead to the death penalty. She was arrested shortly after her arrival and a new trial was prepared. She died, however, soon thereafter, apparently in September 1692.²¹ After her death, almost all of her books, which she had brought for distribution in Sweden, seem to have been destroyed. There are only very few remaining copies of her works, mainly in Swedish libraries.²²

16 There are two copies of a note of recantation. They can both be found in Stockholms domkapitel, Handlingar (see note 15).

17 The discussions in the king's council are recorded in detail. For a summary, see Andersson, "Die Autorität der Prophetin" (see note 2), 13–17.

18 The verdict can be found in *Svea hovrätt*, Huvudarkivet, B II a:55 (1684), Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

19 This decision is documented in a rescriptum from the government of the Electorate of Saxony to the city council of Meissen from Aug. 12, 1685 (Staatsarchiv Dresden).

20 Feustking (see note 6), 300.

21 There is a note on a letter from the governor of Stockholm to the King from Sept. 12, 1692, informing him that Eva Margaretha Frölich has died. The letter is preserved in Riksarkivet (see note 15).

22 See Andersson, "Eva Margaretha Frölich und ihre Schriften" (see note 2).

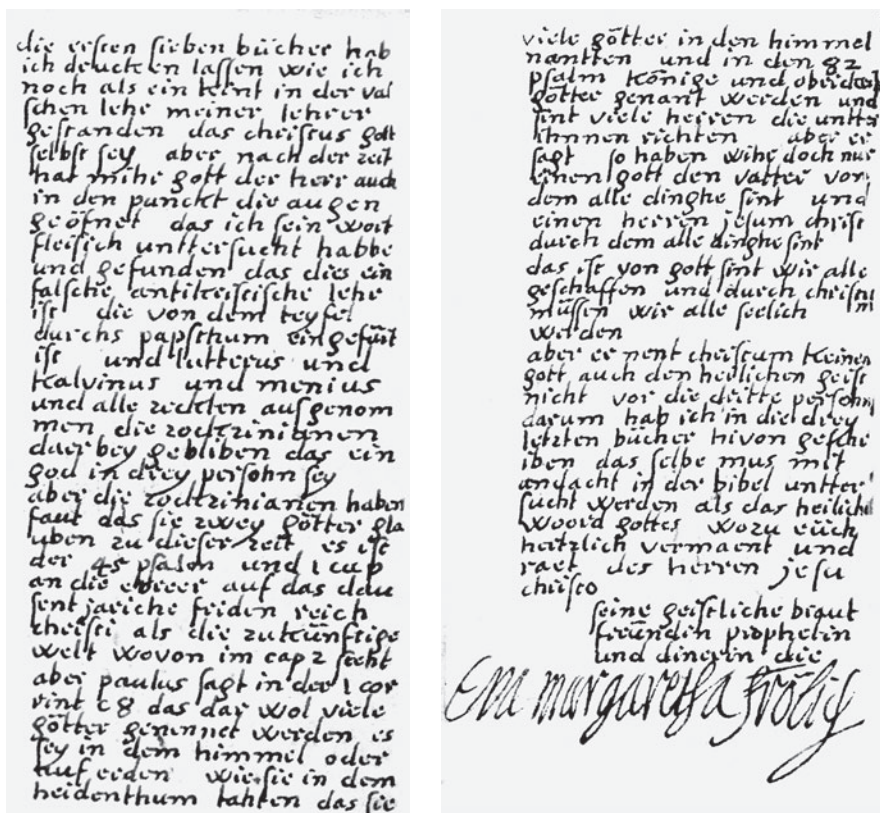


Fig. 2: Handwritten preface to a composite volume of writings by Eva Margaretha Frölich²³

A composite volume of her writings, now in the library of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters in Stockholm (Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek), contains a very interesting handwritten preface by the author.²⁴ There, she attacks Luther, Calvin and the Dutch Anabaptist leader Menno Simons because they believe in the divine nature of Christ. Eva Margaretha Frölich has at the end of her life become an adherent of anti-trinitarianism, a blasphemic theological view punishable in Sweden only by death.²⁵

²³ A transcription of the text can be found in Andersson, "Eva Margaretha Frölich und ihre Schriften" (see note 2).

²⁴ Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm: Bibl rar. Nothing is known about the provenance of this volume.

²⁵ Antitrinitarianism was a widespread theological doctrine in the Netherlands of the seven-

Eva Margaretha Frölich's theological opinions—chiliasm, anti-trinitarianism, and her claim of prophethood—were of course very shocking to many of her contemporaries. Neither did the Swedish authorities, interestingly enough, seem to have appreciated the very specific national perspective from which she viewed the apocalyptic scenario. According to her, the Swedish king Charles XI was to play a leading part in the drama of God's kingdom on earth. He would form an alliance with other leading Protestant rulers: the king of Denmark, the elector of Saxony, and the duke of Lüneburg. At the head of a joint Protestant army, the Swedish king would then conquer his fiendish opponents, rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and convert 144 000 Jews to Christianity. He would then rule over the world as the absolute monarch of the thousand-year kingdom of peace.

Ideas of this kind can be found both in a European and in a Swedish tradition.²⁶ We know, for example, the many prophecies linked to Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, during the Thirty Years' War. Eschatological expectation might also have influenced Queen Christina. Great messianic deeds were expected from her successor on the Swedish throne, Charles X Gustav, and the image of King Charles XII as Messiah can be found, too. Against this background it does not come as a surprise that Charles XI also had someone—Eva Margaretha Frölich—who wanted to make him the central figure in the apocalyptic scenario.

In the following, I would like to outline Eva Margaretha Frölich's national Swedish eschatology. This is, however, not an easy task, since she was anything but a systematic thinker.²⁷

The comet in the year 1680 is the beginning of the apocalyptic course of events. It signifies that Satan is now free to act on earth; the comet also, however, announces the kingdom of Christ, which will finally be established sometime in the years 1698–1699. The year 1680 was also the beginning of the fall of the pope. With the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, his fall will be completed.

teenth century. See Wilhelmus Johannes Kühler, *Het Socianisme in Nederland* (1912; Leeuwarden: De Tille, 1980). For the contemporary European context, see the contributions to *Socianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-century Europe*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Jan Rohls. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 134 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005).

²⁶ For a discussion of these traditions (with further references), see Andersson, *Die fröhliche Botschaft* (see note 2), 30–35, and “Eva Margaretha Frölich: Nationell eskatologi och profetisk auktoritet” (see note 2), 58–60.

²⁷ For a more detailed discussion of Eva Margaretha Frölich's apocalyptic scenario, see Andersson, *Die fröhliche Botschaft* (see note 2), 20–26.

In 1691 the king of France with the aid of other “popish” princes will start a war against Sweden.²⁸ They will advance to Stockholm, and in the year 1692 a great battle will be fought near the Baltic Sea. There the French troops will be conquered in a joint effort of Charles XI and Christ. After this victory the Protestant alliance, which was mentioned already, will be formed, and the march toward Jerusalem will begin. The events of the following years, as projected by Eva Margaretha Frölich, are obscure, since the kingdom of Christ will not be established until 1698–1699. At that time, however, the first resurrection will take place, and the blessed dead will rise from death and go with Christ to heaven, and the Holy Ones beneath Heaven will take possession of the Promised Land under the rule of Charles XI.²⁹ The Swedish king will rebuild the temple, and Jerusalem will never be destroyed again. He will also convert Jews and heathens.

Before the kingdom of Christ is established the pope will have lost his power, as already mentioned. This will happen through the victory of the Turks. After their victory over the pope the Turks will march toward the north and then spend the thousand years of the kingdom of God in Lapland and Finland. There they will form an alliance with the Russians. When the kingdom of God is reaching its end, the Turks and Russians—Gog and Magog—will march toward Jerusalem in an attempt to destroy the Promised Land. They will, however, be struck down by fire from heaven. After this elimination of the Turks and Russians the Last Judgment will take place. Eva Margaretha Frölich has remarkably little to say about this final part of the apocalyptic scenario. Her attention is focused almost exclusively on the role of Charles XI in the apocalyptic drama.

After this short outline of Eva Margaretha Frölich’s national Swedish eschatology it hardly comes as a surprise that many contemporaries viewed her as a lunatic.

The question arises, however, if this kind of thought really lacks any connection to contemporary reality. In the following I will try to show that Eva Margaretha Frölich’s apocalyptic scenario can be seen as the answer to the political situation of Sweden and Europe in the early 1680s.

²⁸ For Protestant people in the Europe of the 1680s, the French King Louis XIV stood out as a tyrant and the beast of the Apocalypse. See Paul Hazard, *The European Mind: The Critical Years 1680–1715* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 83.

²⁹ Eva Margaretha Frölich, *Eine Warhaftige PROPHECEYUNG / und auflegung über 2 Pet. Cap. 3. Wegen der Neuen Himmel und der Neuen Erden; nach der Gnade so Gott mihr gegeben / und gehört alles auff das Reich Christi so auff Erden sol eingerichtet werden. Durch König Carel, den XI. in Schweden. [...]* (Amsterdam: Fridrich Förster, 1686) [Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm, Composite volume, Bibl rar], 4, 9, 9–10.

In the late 1670s, Sweden had been involved in a European war which had almost led to devastating results.³⁰ The resources of the country were practically exhausted, and it was only through the intervention of France, Sweden's ally, that a peace treaty could be concluded on somewhat favorable terms with the Protestant enemies: Denmark, Brandenburg, and Lüneburg. The French king Louis XIV did not consult with his Swedish royal ally before signing the peace treaty also on his behalf, which was a severe blow to the prestige of King Charles XI. Eva Margaretha Frölich was probably not the only one in Sweden who thought that an alliance with the great Catholic power of France directed against Protestant fellow-believers would necessarily lead to humiliation and political disaster.³¹ The solution she proposed was somewhat unusual, although not without a certain logic in its contemporary setting.

The basis for Eva Margaretha Frölich's political thought on world harmony and peace is the notion of the harmoniously functioning early modern state. A state of the seventeenth century, Sweden for example, can be described according to the following four dimensions:³²

Early modern state

	homogeneous	heterogeneous
Language	–	+
Ethnicity	–	+
Religion	+	–
Politics	+	–

In the seventeenth century, a common language was not viewed as the necessary condition for a political community.³³ More than 20 different languages, for

30 See Rystad, *Karl XI* (see note 13), 71–119.

31 In the interrogation held with her on Dec. 7, 1683 (see note 11), Eva Margaretha Frölich asked the Stockholm pastors how they could administer the Lord's Supper to someone who was about to go to war and shed the blood of other Protestant believers. The pastors hesitated to include this provocative question in the protocol.

32 For a somewhat more detailed discussion, see Bo Andersson and Raimo Raag, "Inledning," *Från Nyens skans till Nya Sverige: Språken i 1600-talets Svenska Rike*, ed. Bo Andersson and Raimo Raag. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien. Konferenser, 78 (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien, 2012), 7–9.

33 For a discussion of the opinion that language was viewed mostly as a pure instrument in the seventeenth century, see Michael Isermann, "Empirismus und empiristische Sprachtheorie," *Sprachtheorien der Neuzeit*, vol. 1: *Der epistemologische Kontext neuzeitlicher Sprach- und*

example, were spoken in seventeenth-century Sweden.³⁴ The Swedish Empire comprised a number of different provinces and had a very heterogeneous population: from the Russian-speaking peasants in Carelia and Ingria in the East, to the Native Americans in the colony of New Sweden in what is today the State of Delaware in the West.³⁵ Religious uniformity, on the other hand, was viewed as the prerequisite for a harmoniously functioning state.³⁶ Only one confession was allowed; in the Sweden of the seventeenth century everybody was required to be a Lutheran.³⁷ All deviating religious opinions were severely punished. As far as politics is concerned—the fourth dimension of the chart—absolute loyalty to the king and his interests was required of every subject of the crown. There was no room whatsoever for political dissent.

Against the background of this chart, Eva Margaretha Frölich's view of the thousand-year Kingdom of peace under the rule of the Swedish King Charles XI suddenly starts making sense. According to her apocalyptic scenario, the Catholic powers of Europe will be defeated and eliminated. The same is true of the Russians and Turks, adherents to other non-Lutheran denominations. The Jews and heathens will be converted and Charles XI will—as an absolute monarch—rule a world where all his subjects are exclusively Lutherans. Ethnicity or national background will be of no importance, and there are no indications regarding a common language. Global religious and political homogeneity is the necessary condition for world harmony. How Eva Margaretha Frölich combines this dream of a world with only Lutherans with the anti-trinitarianism she professes at the end of her life must, however, remain an open question.

As one can see, Eva Margaretha Frölich has a definite concept for the organization of the future world. Worth exploring further, however, is why her megalomaniacal dream of Swedish world hegemony was not interesting for political propa-

Grammatiktheorie, ed. Peter Schmitter. *Geschichte der Sprachtheorien*, 4 (Tübingen: Narr, 1999), 126–69; here 164–65.

34 See the contributions to *Från Nyens skans till Nya Sverige* (see note 32).

35 For a discussion of language and culture in New Sweden, see Kim-Eric Williams, “Laughing with the Lenape,” *Från Nyens Skans till Nya Sverige* (see note 32), 335–49.

36 Unity of religion was viewed as the dominant factor which tied society together: “religio vinculum societatis”. For a discussion of this idea, see, for example, Ingun Montgomery, “. . . enighet i religionen och den rätta gudstjänsten är den kraftigaste grundval till ett . . . varachtigt regemente . . .,” *Den svenska juridikens uppblomstring i 1600-talets politiska, kulturella och religiösa stormaktssamhälle. Föreläsningar vid ett svensk-finskt rättshistoriskt tvärvetenskapligt symposium i Uppsala 18–20 april 1983*, ed. Göran Inger. *Rättshistoriska studier*, 9 (Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus, 1984), 47–66.

37 For the religious situation in seventeenth-century Sweden in general, see Ingun Montgomery (ed.), *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, vol. 4: *Enhetskyrkans tid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2002).

ganda purposes in the late seventeenth century. Fifty years earlier, for example, a number of apocalyptic prophecies regarding King Gustavus Adolphus had been spread in the military and political interest of Sweden in the Thirty Years' War. According to some of these prophecies, the Swedish king was expected to change the political order of Europe and establish a kingdom of peace.³⁸ This kind of idea of a universal monarchy was, however, hopelessly outdated in the Europe of the 1680s. During the peace negotiations leading to the Westphalian Peace Treaty of 1648, the rulers and diplomats of Europe had realized that it was not possible for any European state to reach political hegemony. Instead, the interests of the different states had to be balanced against each other; the alternative was a totally devastating, never-ending Thirty Years' War.³⁹ Internal religious and political homogeneity in a state was combined with heterogeneity in religious and political matters on the European level. Eva Margeretha Frölich apparently reacted against a confessional and political arrangement, which she viewed as double bookkeeping. She could not accept the existence of different political and confessional interests in Europe. In her opinion, the world could only be harmonious if it was organized in accordance with the model of the confessionally and politically homogeneous early modern state.

Many aspects of Eva Margaretha Frölich's thinking strike us as being very odd. In her writings, for example, she constantly interprets the Bible. According to her, the entire Scriptures are all about herself and King Charles XI.⁴⁰ She even claims that there is scriptural evidence for the idea of her giving spiritual birth to the Swedish king.⁴¹

³⁸ See, for example, Sylvia Tschopp, *Heilsgeschichtliche Deutungsmuster in der Publizistik des Dreißigjährigen Krieges: Pro- und antischwedische Propaganda in Deutschland 1628 bis 1635*. Mikrokosmos, 29 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 1991); and Johan Nordström, "Lejonet från Norden," *Samlaren* N.F. 15 (1934): 1–66.

³⁹ See Sven Lundkvist, "Die schwedischen Kriegs- und Friedensziele 1632–1648," *Krieg und Politik 1618–1648: Europäische Probleme und Perspektiven*, ed. Konrad Repgen. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, 8 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988), 219–40; here 226–27; and Johannes Burkhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992), 198–202.

⁴⁰ See the section "Selbstbezogene Exegese" in Andersson, "Die Autorität der Prophetin" (see note 2), 27–31.

⁴¹ Frölich, *Predig-Ampt* (see note 12), 129. Another interesting contemporary parallel to this theological idea is Eva von Buttlar, who claims that she will give birth to the new Messiah. See Willi Temme, *Krise der Leiblichkeit: Die Sozietät der Mutter Eva (Buttlarsche Rotte) und der radikale Pietismus um 1700*. Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus, 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 299–350.

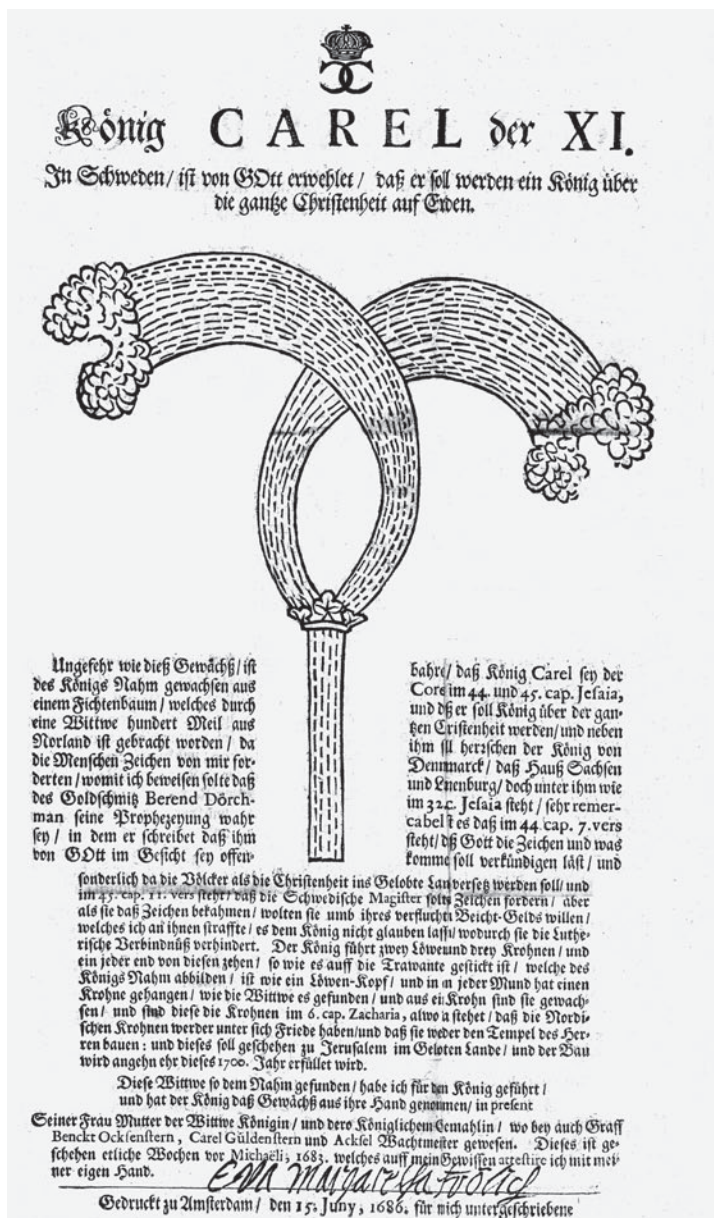


Fig. 3: Leaflet by Eva Margaretha Frölich, published in Amsterdam 1686⁴²

42 This leaflet can be found in a composite volume of Eva Margaretha Frölich's works in Uppsala universitetsbibliotek [Cr. 1:144]. A very interesting feature of her writing is her practice of signing

Another example, which she often refers to, is a pine branch which was brought to her by a woman from northern Sweden. This pine branch formed a double 'C', the mirror-image monogram of King Charles XI. This proof from nature was apparently very important to her, and it forms the basis of argumentation in one of her leaflets published in both German and Dutch. The king's monogram can be seen on top of the page.

She also reproduces the double 'C' on the title page of many of her books. The similarity between the mirror-image monogram of King Charles XI and the pine branch can, of course, hardly be overlooked. There were definitely a number of reasons why many contemporaries questioned Eva Margaretha Frölich's mental state.

The general tendency of her political thought is a different matter, however. There is hardly any doubt that her apocalyptical scenario reflects the severe crisis of the Swedish state in the early 1680s. Her national Swedish eschatology has definite traits of compensatory thinking. But her most important dream is the establishment of an everlasting peace in Europe without devastating wars between the great powers. The only solution she could imagine was the organization of the entire world according to the model of the confessionally and politically homogeneous early modern state. On this point, there is a definite 'order in insanity' in her political thinking. It is another matter that this goal was totally unrealistic.

the copies of her works, in order to personally guarantee that her writings contain the truth and to reassure the reader that her books are no falsifications. For a discussion, see Andersson, "Female Writing in Manuscript and Print" (see note 2).

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Melancholy as the Condition of Knowledge in Jakob Böhme's *Aurora*

The following article intends to provide an analysis of Böhme's specific model of epistemology, as it is developed in the *Aurora* and, in particular, in the portrayal of the mystical epiphany, which Böhme claims to have experienced in 1600. This model, which is presented as being opposed to a traditional institutionalized and empirical understanding, incorporates not only nature and divinity as its crucial elements, but also—and primarily—melancholy. For Böhme, the epistemic process is not simply a matter of the mind but rather a sensational as well as a sensual experience, and therefore all “wise” scientific efforts are destined to fail from the beginning as they try to acquire mere insight without being driven by an inner need (identified as a form of melancholy) to recognize God.

After a short paragraph on Böhme's reception in Section I of this paper, Section II will cover the fundamentals of Böhme's notion of knowledge, as presented in the *Aurora*. Sections III and IV will address the themes of nature and sensuality, essential aspects of Böhme's model, while section V will eventually turn toward the renowned experience and the connection of the themes of knowledge and melancholy.

I A Glance Ahead

When Friedrich Schelling got to Jena in 1798, he soon associated with the informal circle of the young Romantics around the Brothers Schlegel. Alongside similar aesthetical and political views, a common interest amongst the circle's members was the extensive study of the works of Jakob Böhme.¹ This preoccupation went far beyond simple literary reception. Indeed, particularly with Tieck and Novalis, it resembled more a form of worship and seemed to have a strong identity-forming character, as becomes apparent in Hardenberg's often-cited ‘Dankgedicht’ to

¹ Schelling engages extensively with the work of Böhme after reading Friedrich Christoph Oetinger's Swedenborg volume. For a detailed outline of the relationship of the Jena Romantics to Böhme, see: Edgar Ederheimer, *Jakob Böhme und die Romantiker. I. und II. Teil: Jakob Böhmes Einfluß auf Tieck und Novalis* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1904).

Tieck.² In this poem, Böhme does not only appear as a highly stylized paragon,³ the last verse even augurs a reunion with Böhme himself.

Where from, one may ask, does such an affection that goes far beyond an admiration of Böhme's imagery and use of language, arise? The answer to this question seems to rest in another idiosyncrasy of his writing, which captivates Schelling and Novalis in particular: Böhme's model of knowledge acquisition and the associated theme of melancholy. Both Schelling and Novalis embrace, adapt, and build upon this complex of the two, deeply interwoven subjects in their own specific manner, through philosophy as well as through literature.⁴ This not only shows the influence of Böhme's writings per se on Germany's intellectual history, but especially the remarkable potency of this characteristic connection between knowledge and melancholy.⁵

II Knowledge and "Einfalt"

Knowledge is a topic Böhme likes to write about quite frequently, and it appears most prominently in the *Aurora*, Böhme's account of his own alleged revelation experience and the subject of this text. What makes the model of epistemology, as it is described there, so unique, is the way in which knowledge acquisition is connected with the experience of melancholy. The *Aurora* is all about the mystical revelation Böhme claims to have had in the year 1600, but it took him eighteen years before he finally put it down in writing⁶ in 1618). However, it describes

² For details on the role of Böhme in Tieck's poem, see Paola Mayer, "Reinventing the Sacred: The Romantic Myth of Jakob Böhme," *The German Quarterly* 69.3 (Summer 1996): 247–59.

³ As in the tradition of Böhme's associate and first biographer, Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652), who played an essential role in the glorification and idolization of Böhme. See Abraham von Franckenberg, "Gründlicher und wahrhafter Bericht von dem Leben und Abscheid des in GOtt selig=ruhenden Jacob Böhmens," *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730 in elf Bänden*, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1955–1961), vol. 10, 5–31. For further details on the hagiographic aspects of Franckenberg's portrayal of Böhme, see Mayer, *Reinventing the Sacred* (see note 2), 248–50.

⁴ Especially regarding Novalis's writing on the subject of knowledge, numerous motifs and structures of Böhme's thinking cannot only be found again but seem to be directly continued. Novalis's expanded use of the *Sophia* figure may be the most notable example of this adaption.

⁵ Böhme's influence reaches far beyond the above-mentioned Romantics. It can clearly be seen in the writings of such different authors as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, Martin Buber, Hermann Hesse, Carl Gustav Jung, et al.

⁶ There was to be no formal publication of the *Aurora* during Böhme's lifetime. The fragmentary manuscript found its way from the inner circle of Böhme's acquaintances to sympathizers and

not so much the circumstances, but rather the inner development related to this event; it is about the revelation itself as well as about what has been revealed.⁷

The *Aurora*'s original German title *Morgen Röte im auffgang*⁸ ('The Rise of Dawn')—besides being a reference to the *Song of Songs*⁹—already touches upon the topic of insight—its conveyance is even the text's professed intention. However this is not the only reason for its selection as an appropriate textual basis.

Nearly every idea present in Böhme's later works can—at least in a rudimental form—be traced back to the *Aurora*, which is why it may be quite safe to refer to Böhme's first work as his principal one. Of course, this is also one of its biggest drawbacks: not only is the *Aurora* a work unfinished, it is also by far the most unstructured among all of Böhme's texts. One could label this a form of stunning originality, but the text proves to be rather difficult to comprehend. In fact, the twenty-six chapters are riddled with repetitions, recurrences and generally a remarkable lack of structure and contingency. Of course, Böhme, well aware of this, is able to provide the reader with a keen reason:

Es wird Manche Species ofte wider holed / und Immer Tiffer beschriben / umb des lesers / auch meiner selbst zehen Begreiffligkeit willen.¹⁰

[Many a species is frequently repeated and described ever deeper for the benefit of the reader's dense comprehension and my own.]

from there quickly to bitter adversaries as well. For more details on the circumstances of this process, see Andrew Weeks, *Böhme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 93–95.

7 This text will focus more on the former than on the latter.

8 The full title is rather Baroque: *Morgen Röte im auffgang daß ist Die wurtzel oder mutter der PHILOSOPHIA ASTROLOGIA vnd THEOLOGIA. Auß Rechtem Grunde oder Beschreibung der natur wie alles gewesen . . .* The title's Latin translation was only coined after Böhme gave the manuscript away. See Ferdinand van Ingen, "Die Jungfrau Sophia und die Jungfrau Maria bei Jakob Böhme," *Gott, Natur und Mensch, in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Alois Maria Haas and Jan Garewicz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994):147–64; here 147, and Wilfried Barner, "Über das 'Einfältige' in Jakob Böhmes 'Aurora,'" *Religion und Religiosität im Zeitalter des Barock*, ed. Dieter Breuer. *Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung*, 25 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 441–54; here 444–45.

9 See below (Section IV, also note 39).

10 Citations from the *Aurora* in this article are taken from the edition: Jacob Böhme, *Die Urschriften*, ed. Werner Buddecke, vol. 1 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1963); here preface, 107. Quotations from the *Aurora* follow the scheme: chapter (resp. preface): paragraph no. Translations (where not stated otherwise) follow the still to be released English language edition by Andrew Weeks. The authors would like to thank Andrew Weeks sincerely for the possibility to cite from this translation.

When Böhme talks of knowledge, he usually talks about that which he considers to be its dark side—education. Trying to distance himself from all kinds of established knowledge as much as possible, Böhme castigates the representatives of what would today be viewed as science and academia—and in doing so does not refrain from astringent criticism: “O ihr Teuffels=Lehrer / wie wollet ihr vor dem Zorne GÖttes bestehen?”¹¹ (“Oh you Devil-teachers how do you want to stand up to the wrath of God?”) he writes in *Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi*. He continues, “Ihr seyd aus Babel / aus der grossen Huren gesandt / aus der Mutter der grossen Hurerey auff Erden: Nicht aus der Jungfrawen seyd ihr gebohren”¹² (“You are sent from Babel, the great whore, the mother of all harlotry on earth: not from the Virgin were you borne”).

In contrast, Böhme never tires of emphasizing his own “Einfalt,” his humble simplicity and unpretentious naivety. Already in the preface he states: “Also Auch kahn ich von mihr selbst Nichts Sagen Rügen oder Schreiben / Als daß. Das ich bin ein Einfeltiger Man Darzu ein armer sündner”¹³ (“I can therefore say, claim, or write nothing at all about myself other than that I am a simple man and indeed a poor sinner”).

Of course, Böhme’s work is—especially when he is referring to his own person—highly stylized, and this disassociation most notably has two main objectives: on the one hand, it allows Böhme to turn the epistemic disadvantage of not being a scholar but a shoemaker by profession (and thus not having had access to any higher, institutionalized education) to the outstanding advantage of being unspoiled; on the other, by invoking the topos of “Einfalt,” he places himself and his writings in a certain tradition: It is a fairly common practice in sixteenth-century texts¹⁴ with a long tradition grounded in antiquity to use “Einfalt” as a catch-phrase for supporting one’s own credibility, as it invokes the idea of a proximity between truth and simplicity, which in turn refers to Christ himself. In fact, Böhme does not actually live up to his proclaimed “Einfalt,” as he is—despite not having received any higher education—evidently literate¹⁵ and

¹¹ Jacob Böhme, “Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi,” Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften* (see note 3) vol. 4, 13:3 (our own translation).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Aurora*, preface:95.

¹⁴ Barner, “Über das ‘Einfältige’” (see note 7) 445. See also Bo Andersson, *Du Solst wissen es ist aus keinem stein gesogen: Studien zu Jacob Böhmes Aurora oder Morgen Röte im auffgang*. Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), 89–113.

¹⁵ An outline of possible influences can be found in: Susanne Edel, “Kabbala in der Theosophie Jacob Böhmes und in der Metaphysik Leibnizens,” *Religion und Religiosität im Zeitalter des Ba-*

particularly well-versed in the Bible. Indeed, Böhme's humility appears to lie extraordinarily close to pride.¹⁶

But if one were, for a moment, to leave Böhme's remarkable self-portrayal aside, it becomes apparent that there is in fact a third, methodological, reason for the emphasis on "Einfalt" and the rejection of institutionalized knowledge: in Böhme's epistemological model, such an approach does not make it possible to acquire any *true* or *real* knowledge per se. All 'scientific' efforts are destined to fail as long as the search for knowledge is limited by the boundaries of empiricism. For example, Böhme notes, not without a certain degree of mockery and satisfaction, "Es Haben auch wol Edliche phisicy sich vntterstanden die selbe Höhe [der Himmel] zu messen / und gar Seltzsame ding Herfür Bracht"¹⁷ ("certain physicists have undertaken to measure the distance to their [the skies'] heights, thereby arriving at many a bizarre conclusion"). This does not solely refer to physicists, but extends to "doctores, schul-meister" and representatives of many other disciplines, all epitomized under the memorable term of "Meister Klügling" (roughly translated as "Master Smart Aleck"), who become the target of Böhme's polemics, as their principal error is their sole focus on nature.

This is quite remarkable, as Böhme himself not only uses—as Alexandre Koyré put it—an "amalgame étrange d'images . . . astrologiques, physiques, biologiques,"¹⁸ but also gives nature a crucial place in his model of knowledge,¹⁹ which leads to the fundamental question: What, according to Böhme, actually constitutes knowledge if it may neither be institutional nor empirical, nor 'scientific' (in any sense) at all, but must yet deeply incorporate nature?

III Move Into Nature

The incorporation of nature is in fact, what Schelling later sees as the greatest strength of theosophy (which in the case of Schelling clearly means: Böhme): "diesen Vorzug haben die theosophischen Systeme . . . , daß in ihnen wenigstens

rock, ed. Dieter Breuer. *Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung*, 25 (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1995), 845–56; here 849–50.

¹⁶ See: Alois Maria Haas, "Erfahrung und Sprache in Böhmes 'Aurora,'" Haas and Garewicz, *Gott* (see note 7), 1–22; here 16.

¹⁷ *Aurora*, 19:3.

¹⁸ Alexandre Koyré, *La Philosophie de Jacob Böhme*. Bibliothèque d'histoire de la philosophie (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929), 74.

¹⁹ The term 'nature' appears (as such and in variations) nearly five hundred times in the *Aurora* according to our own counting.

eine Natur ist”²⁰ (“this advantage have the theosophic systems . . . that there is at least nature in them”). Indeed, Böhme does not turn against ‘science’ per se. His criticism rather aims at any kind of study that does not focus on God at the same time:

Also Sage Nun ich / So dein Hertze In deiner wissenschafft nicht mit Gott Inqualiered /
aus einem rechten vorsatz der liebe / So bistu ein Heuchler lügner vnd Mörder für Gott /
Den Gott er höred Nimandes gebete /das Hertze richte sich den In gehorsam Gantz in Gott.²¹

[if your heart is not joined with God in your knowledge and lore on the proper basis of love, you are a hypocrite, liar, and murderer before God. For God hears no one’s prayers unless the heart submits to him in complete obedience.]

Under the right premises, experience of nature and acquisition of knowledge even have to determine one another—and it certainly is no coincidence that Böhme, immediately after the impression of his revelation experience, heads straight “ins Grüne”²² (lit.: ‘into the green’), which is where the received revelation first takes full effect. Böhme’s fundamental instrument of insight, vision (i.e., that which may refer to the sense of sight itself as well as that of internal perception), takes place in nature:

Als Ich ahn schawed . . . die Sonne und sternen / So wol die wolcken darzu Regen und
schnee / Vnd betracht in meinem Geiste die Gantze schepffung dieser weld . . . Holtz und
steine und erde / vnd Elementen²³

[at the sight of . . . sun and stars, clouds, rain, and snow I regarded in my spirit the great creation of this world . . . wood, stone, and earth, and the elements]

However, Böhme’s notion of nature is neither experimental nor technical. It is rather a certain kind of sensual experience.²⁴ This may sound rather vague, but indeed concisely expresses Böhme’s concept because he thinks of nature and God as intimately connected and the experience of God as a foremost sensual one. This understanding of nature, however, is no pantheistic one. Böhme obviously even puts some effort into not being regarded as a pantheist. For him, nature is

²⁰ Friedrich Schelling, “Die Weltalter,” *Schellings Werke*, ed. Manfred Schröter, vol. 4 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1927), 580.

²¹ *Aurora*, 20:19.

²² According to Franckenberg, *Gründlicher und wahrhafter Bericht* (see note 3), vol. 10, 11.

²³ *Aurora*, 19:5 and 6.

²⁴ See Gernot Böhme, “Jacob Böhmes sinnliche Naturtheorie,” *Natur: Ein Lesebuch*, ed. Rolf Peter Sieferle (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), 51–59; here 51.

neither God Himself nor completely separate from Him, but rather a part of God, or more precisely, a part of his effect:

Diese Natura / ist Nun wie ein Tottes / vnuerstendiges wesen / vnd stehed nicht mitte in der krafft der geburd / Sondern ist ein leib / In welchem die krafft gebüred / Sie ist aber der leib Gottes / vnd Hat alle krafft / wie die Gantze gebärung / vnd die geburt Geister nehmen ihre stercke vnd krafft aus dem leibe der Natur²⁵

[This natura is at this point like a dead, insensate being that does not stand in the power of the birth. It is rather a body in which that power gives birth. It is the body of God with all powers of the full generation. The generative spirits take their strength and power from the body of nature]

Particularly the effect of nature that makes it possible for God to manifest himself, “leib” (= body) and thus real presence, is crucial here. To use Böhme’s own words: God “qualifies” within nature and grants it thus unimagined importance, as it therefore becomes essential for His own existence:

Auch So Sihestu / wie die Natur nicht könne von den krefftten Gottes vntter schieden werden . . . Die Gottheit / das ist / die Heilige krafft des Hertzens Gottes wird in der Natur gebohren.²⁶

[From this you can see as well how nature cannot be distinguished from the powers of God. It is all a single body. The divinity, which is the holy power of the heart of God, is born in nature.]

It is fitting that for Böhme the second person of God represents precisely the “krafft Gottes” (power of God) as in Christ Himself God and the human being (as part of nature) are united.²⁷

Despite its importance, nature alone is not the sole source of insight in Böhme’s model of knowledge acquisition—not even in the mentioned conjunction with God. As demonstrated, Böhme neither proceeds empirically, nor does his method of perception reach far enough to equal a meditational immersion into nature, that would allow a complete deduction of the process of knowledge acquisition from nature alone (which would be suspiciously close to pantheism again). Rather, Böhme ties a strong link between the internal and the external

²⁵ *Aurora*, 23:49.

²⁶ *Aurora*, 23:59.

²⁷ The cited passage remains problematic nonetheless: That nature is God’s body and that God’s ‘Wirkkräfte’ (lit: the angels and “source spirits”) draw “their powers and strength from the body of nature” (“ihre krafft und stercke / Immer aus dem leibe der Natur”) (*Aurora*, 23:87) at the same time, creates one of the idiosyncratic, mutually dependant dual structures that are present in the *Aurora* at several places.

world, between micro- and macrocosm, but nature is only a single (nevertheless important) part of this.

However, the question remains as to how the pictured connection of nature and God (who evidently plays the biggest part in the acquisition of knowledge) marks the core of Böhme's epistemological model, that is, how knowledge of God can be knowledge itself and why a non-empirical approach can be the only fruitful one.

IV Sense and Sensuality

The answer lies in one of the many factors that were to make Böhme such a shining paragon for the Jena Romantics. For Böhme, the accruing of knowledge is, as already shown, not only not something scientific but, above all, it is a sensual process. Nature is the place, the object as well as the subject of this sensual experience. This goes far beyond a simple concept of perception (and also has more of an emotional side to it), as the 'true nature' of things can only be 'truly' recognized through the senses (in fact, the German term 'übersinnlich,' as it is used by Immanuel Kant, probably derives directly from Böhme).²⁸ A good example for how literally the term 'sensual' is used by Böhme—as well as an example of how vivid his imagery can be—may be the character of "Sophia" he creates in a later work.²⁹ "Sophia" is an amalgamation of personified wisdom and a combination of Adam, Christ, and the Virgin and visits Böhme under a tree to consummate their marriage, thus granting him knowledge. The *Aurora* already foreshadows this idea with its title, a reference to the bridal figure from the *Song of Songs* and has therefore a distinctly erotic dimension.

But why is the sensual experience of nature so close to an 'übersinnliche Erfahrung', that is (and here the English language expresses very well the other aspect we are focusing on), to a supernatural experience? According to the logic of Böhme's model it has to be because, as already mentioned, it describes nature and any part of it—including men—as the body of God. Therefore, true knowl-

28 See Anselm Model, "Anmerkungen zum Terminus 'übersinnlich' bei Jacob Böhme und Immanuel Kant," *Erkenntnis und Wissenschaft—Jacob Böhme (1575–1624). Internationales Jacob-Böhme-Symposium Görlitz 2000*, ed. by the Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Görlitz. Neues Lausitzisches Magazin: Beiheft 2 (Görlitz: Oettel, 2000), 158–63; here 158.

29 I.e., *Beschreibung der Drei Principien göttlichen Wesens / De tribus principiis*. See also Van Ingen, *Die Jungfrau Sophia* (see note 7); see also Roland Pietsch, "Jacob Böhmes Lehre von der göttlichen Weisheit und von der himmlischen Jungfrau Sophia," *Erkenntnis und Wissenschaft* (see note 27), 35–51.

edge must always be knowledge of God. And God Himself, who is situated in the “Ungrund,” an everlasting circle of self-recognition, is the origin as well as the end point of any possible insight.³⁰

Interestingly, Böhme's God in this “Ungrund” is highly sensual as without any wake sense or, more precisely, without consciousness: “vnd nach diser Tiffe / weis Gott selber nicht was er ist / den er weis keinen anfang / vnd auch nictes seines Gleichen / vnd auch kein Ende”³¹ (“And in this depth, God himself does not know what he is. For he knows no beginning and nothing like himself, nor any end”). This may explain why Böhme soon found himself embroiled in conflict with orthodoxy,³² and this also points toward another factor that explains why the institutionalized method of the “Meister Klügling” is incapable of reaching true knowledge: it is not directed toward God and therefore blind to full truth. As Böhme puts it: “Merckt Ihr weld klugen Juristen / wo ihr nicht für disen spiegel / für das Helle / vnd klare ahngesichte Gottes wolled / und euch alda bespiegeln . . .”³³ (“Take heed, you world-wise jurists! If you do not want to come before this mirror, before hell and the clear countenance of God, to see your reflection . . .”).

However, considering the importance of—and this nearly total dependence on—the factor of God, the question arises where in the process man's role lies—as revelation can hardly be a completely random and arbitrary process and therefore must draw at least some influence from the knowledge seeker. Again, the answer lies in the abstract character of God, the “Ungrund,” which is not merely a metaphysical concept but requires emotional, subjective, and even ecstatic participation.³⁴ Becoming part of this sensual and highly personal process of recognizing God not only requires a certain relinquishing of self and world, but also a special, unique state of mind.

30 For the term “Ungrund,” see Yasuo Okamura, “Schelling und Böhme,” *Erkenntnis und Wissenschaft* (see note 27) 58–71, and Friedrich Vollhardt, “Ungrund: Der Prozess der Theogonie in den Schriften Jakob Böhmes—Mit Hinweisen zu einigen Praetexten und zur Wirkung im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Literarische und religiöse Kommunikation in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: DFG-Symposion 2006*, ed. Peter Strohschneider (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 89–123.

31 *Aurora*, 23:17.

32 Most notably (and with serious consequences for Böhme) with Gregorius Richter, the pastor of Böhme's hometown Görlitz. See Günther Bonheim, *Zeichendeutung und Natursprache. Ein Versuch über Jacob Böhme*. Epistemata, 87 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992), 6.

33 *Aurora*, 23:75.

34 Okamura, *Schelling und Böhme* (see note 29) 62.

V Melancholy

The nature of this state of mind will hardly come as a surprise. If one puts, for a moment, Böhme's epistemic model aside and focuses on his description of the (alleged) experienced melancholy, it becomes apparent that as early as in the first chapter, Böhme mentions a certain "sour quality":

Wenn diese] Sawer qualitet . . . sich zu Sehr erhebed oder in einem ding zu Sehr quelled, das sie sich end zinded / So gebüred Sie traurigkeit / Melancoley . . . Eine ver gessung alles gutten / Eine trawrigkeit des lebens / Ein hauß des Todes / Ein Anfang der trawrigkeit vnd ein Ende der freuden.³⁵

[The sour quality . . . For if it rises up or surges too much in a thing so that it is inflamed, it yields sadness, melancholy . . . An oblivion of all good things, a sadness of life, a house of death, a beginning of sadness, and an end of joys.]

The cited passage, an example of Böhme's sometimes flowery style, is clearly reminiscent of definitions of melancholy in the Paracelsian tradition.³⁶ However, a more characteristic, and doubtlessly the most important indication for Böhme's notion of melancholy is found in the nineteenth chapter, which essentially portrays the revelation experience to which Böhme refers repeatedly.³⁷ Here, he describes two different sources of melancholy (the term appears twice): the deeply felt insignificance (and helplessness) of man when faced with the full, inconceivable extent of God and the earth and the fundamental presence of both good and evil in all things. Relating to the first, he writes:

Bin Ich Endlich Gar in eine Harte Melancoley vnd Traurigkeit gerathen / Als Ich ahn schawed die Grosse Tiffe dieser weld / Dar zu die Sonne und sternem . . . Dar zu betrachte Ich das kleine füncklin des Menschen / was er doch gegen diesem Grossen wercke Himmels vnd erden für Gott mechte geacht sein³⁸

35 *Aurora*, 1:23.

36 For further details on the Paracelsian as well as Rosicrucian and kabbalistic influence, see again Edel, *Kabbala in der Theosophie* (see note 14), 849–50; Flavio Cuniberto, *Jakob Böhme* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2000) and Andrew Weeks, "Historische Finsternis und poetisches Licht im Werke Jacob Böhmes," *Erkenntnis und Wissenschaft* (see note 27) 9–20; here 12–13.

37 Böhme also refers to his revelation experience in the *Trost-Schrift von Vier Complexionen*, implicitly hinting at the *Aurora* (Jacob Böhme, ". . . Trost-Schrift von Vier Complexionen . . .," *Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften* (see note 3), vol. 4, 241:79. Quotations from the *Vier Complexionen* follow the scheme: page: paragraph no). The theme of melancholy appears there prominently as well. The four 'complexions' match the four temperament types (sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic) although Böhme dedicates notably more space to the melancholic temperament (see *Vier Complexionen* pages 220–52, especially 229–47. See also Weeks, *Böhme* (see note 5), 1–4.

38 *Aurora*, 19:5 and 7.

[I at last fell into severe melancholy and sadness at the sight of the great depths of the world with its sun and stars . . . Moreover, I regarded the tiny little spark that is the human being and considered what it amounted to before God, set against this great work which is the heavens and earth.]

The antithetic confrontation of the “tiny little spark” and the great creations before the judgment seat of God is obvious. And the relentless experience of one's own insignificance can very well be traced in Böhme's language—however influenced by form, tradition, and stylization it may be. The repeated and recurring emphasis on his own lowliness, “Einfalt” and man's triviality contrastingly compared to the heavenly omnipotence and the greatness of God quite clearly demonstrates the relevance of the individual in Böhme's worldview (i.e., in light of the movements of heaven and—finally—God Himself): not much more than having to be “der weld / vnd des Teufels Spectakel”³⁹ (“a spectacle to the world and to the devil”).

As the second cause of melancholy, Böhme describes the fundamental presence of evil, which seems to exist in at least equal amounts to good, and the consequence of this constellation—which is essentially the problem of theodicy:

Weil Ich aber befand / das in allen dingen Böses und Gutes war / In den Elementen so wol als in den Creaturen / vnd daß es In dieser weld dem Gottlosen so wol ginge als dem fromen / auch das die Barbarischen velcker die Besten lender Inne hetten / vnd das in das glücke noch wol mehr bey stünde als dem fromen / ward Ich dero wegen Gantz Melancholisch / vnd hoch betriebed⁴⁰

[I noticed that there was evil and good in all things, in elements and creatures, and that in this world the godless fared as well as the pious, and indeed that the barbaric peoples possessed the best lands, enjoying better luck than the pious. This caused me to grow gravely melancholy and deeply troubled.]

Recognizing the individual's insignificance or being confronted with an (at least in many ways) evil world, may be already sufficient reasons for getting into a melancholic state of mind, but in addition, there is no consolation or solace to be found—not even in (sacred) texts.⁴¹ As Böhme writes: “vnd kuntte mich keine

³⁹ *Aurora*, 11:83.

⁴⁰ *Aurora*, 19:8–9. By referring to the welfare of the heathen, Böhme hints at Psalm 73 as well as at the *Song of Songs* and its theme of ‘vanitas.’

⁴¹ During the Enlightenment, Böhme's alleged melancholy was a frequent subject of discussion among his critics (arguably the most prominent were Johann Wolfgang Jaeger and Jacob Brucker—both professors of Lutheran theology). As a result, Böhme was—at least in the eyes of his adversaries—even seen as a “perfect melancholic” (Hans-Jürgen Schings, *Melancholie*

schrift Trösten, welche mihr doch fast wol bekant war"⁴² ("and no scripture could comfort me / though it was well known to me").

To recapitulate, for Böhme, gaining knowledge proves to be a process that is highly sensual as well as highly God-related and may ultimately only occur through divine revelation. To acquire such knowledge, a certain state of mind is necessary, and that is what the *Aurora* attempts to realize.⁴³ The sources of melancholy are the confrontation with the existence of evil on the one hand and the feeling of insignificance in the face of the world's "depth" on the other. Considering that the state of the world and the individual within it is the *Aurora's* main theme (aside from theogony), it appears that melancholy is in fact the mentioned state of mind that is necessary to acquire knowledge—particularly as overcoming it promises knowledge as well.

Indeed, melancholy plays the crucial role in the process that Böhme describes as his revelation. Not only does it trigger the event, it is the foundation of the experience itself. The description Böhme delivers is quite detailed: at first, he turns to the scriptures for consolation, but cannot find any there, as he searches not for comforting words but for an understanding of the world (and of God)—i.e., consolation through knowledge. Another step then follows, as a literal struggle for knowledge emerges as Böhme describes himself struggling with God for knowledge⁴⁴:

Als Ich aber in solcher Tribsal / Meinen Geist / den Ich wenig und nichts verstund was er
waß / Ernstlich in Gott er Hub / als mit einem Grossen sturm / vnd mein gantz Hertze vnd
gemütte / Sampt allen andern gedanken vnd willen sich alles darein schluß / ohne nach
lassen / mit der liebe vnd Barmhertzigkeit Gottes zu ringen / vnd nicht nach zu lassen er
segnet mich den / das ist / er erleuchte mich den mit seinem Heiligen Geiste / da mitte
Ich seinen willen mechte ver stehen / vnd meiner Trawrigkeit loß werden / So Brach der
Geist durch.⁴⁵

[But when, in this deeply troubled state, I lifted up my spirit, which I understood not, earnestly toward God in firm assault, resolving my entire heart and mind with all its thoughts and impulses toward the one purpose of grappling ceaselessly with the love and mercy of

und Aufklärung: *Melancholiker und ihre Kritiker in Erfahrungsseelenkunde und Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* [Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977], 167. See also 167–71 and 213–14).

⁴² *Aurora*, 19:9 (our own translation).

⁴³ The fact that Böhme writes about the process of his own "Erkenntniß" (i.e., gaining of knowledge) to provide an "Exempel" is frequently thematized—probably most prominently (and even in reference to the *Aurora*) in the *Vier Complexionen* (*Vier Complexionen* 241:79 as well as 244:90).

⁴⁴ This struggle is a returning motif in the *Vier Complexionen* as well (e.g., 225:18; 229–30:35; 238:66; 241:80).

⁴⁵ *Aurora*, 19:10.

God: at that point, he blessed me, that is, illuminated me, with his Holy Spirit, so that I might understand his will and be rid of my sadness: at that point, the spirit broke through.]

This passage is certainly not coincidentally reminiscent of Böhme's namesake in the Old Testament and his struggle with God. It also reveals another reason why Böhme chose to call his text the *Morgenröte* ('dawn') as a symbol for knowledge itself: "And Iacob was left alone: and there wrestled a man with him, vntill the breaking of the day." The reference becomes even more apparent in the Luther Bible's wording: "Vnd [Jakob] blieb allein. DA rang ein Man mit jm bis die morgenröte [!] anbrach."⁴⁶

Considering the emphasis that Böhme places on the struggle, this is not a typically mystical passage, as it describes the process of revelation as a surprisingly active one. The end of the experience, however, marks an extreme turn toward the 'Innere' (lit: the inside)—to the innermost of God (as—once again—insight only happens within and at the hands of God). After all, the accomplishment of gaining knowledge is an accomplishment of the self in unity with God:

Wen Nun dieses geschicht / So bistu wie der Gantze Gott ist / der da selber Himmel / Erde / Sternen und Elementa ist / vnd Hast auch ein Solch Regiment in dier / vnd Bist auch eine Solche Person / wie der gantze Gott in dem locum dieser weld ist.⁴⁷

[When this happens, you are like the entire God who himself is the very heavens, earth, stars, and elements. You have the same sort of realm within you and are the sort of person that the entire God is in the place of this world.]

Nevertheless, this struggle—which is a struggle for knowledge—can, as already mentioned, only be successful if it aims for God. 'False' knowledge, like that pursued by the "Meister Klügling," like the knowledge of Scriptures, can finally only lead to more disappointment and melancholy, as it cannot convey any comfort. However, it may be the first step on the pathway to 'true' knowledge—due to its potential to amplify melancholy—if the seeker were to focus his struggle eventually on God Himself.

⁴⁶ Gen. 32:24. Taken from the 1611 King James resp. the 1545 Luther Bible. Again, this scene appears—almost literally paraphrased—in the *Vier Complexionen* (*Vier Complexionen* 243–244:89), as well as another allusion to the term "Morgen Röte," this time referring to Ps. 130:6 (see *Vier Complexionen*, 241:79).

⁴⁷ *Aurora*, 23:13.

VI Conclusion: The Relevance of Böhme's Concept of Melancholy

Böhme constructs his model of knowledge acquisition like his self-portrayal: in sharp distinction to established academia, barely differentiating neither between schools nor disciplines. According to Böhme, knowledge cannot be acquired in an empirical manner, but it certainly feeds on a sensual perception of nature, through which (as it is a part of) God already takes part in the epiphany's preparation. To receive the revelation finally, however, realization of one's self, the insight in the vanity and uselessness of human wisdom, and the painful confrontation with individual's subjection to evil and God Himself are necessary.

Of course, Böhme's portrayal of melancholy can hardly be compared to (or even approached with) modern concepts of mental disorders⁴⁸—and especially the idea, that melancholy yields much more than pain, suffering, and desperation may seem rather strange to the modern reader. It is, however, precisely this aspect of Böhme's model that makes for such a sophisticated concept with a much broader range than today's connotation of a simple disease with an utterly negative character. Particularly the positive and productive⁴⁹ function of melancholy (even as an intermediary to God!) reveals a concept that is much more complex than modern notions which conceive mental health exclusively as a matter of illness or sanity.

It is no new insight that there may be a certain link between inspiration and desperation, between creativity and suffering. Defining melancholy as an essential factor in a model of epistemology might be, however, rather exceptional. And it might have rarely been done in such a unique manner as in Böhme's *Aurora*. Melancholy not only plays the key role of a benchmark for will, humility, insight and morality—it also becomes a condition related to knowledge in more than one way: not only as a state that comes with obtained knowledge, but especially as a prerequisite—as a state one has to be in to achieve any kind of knowledge at all: a condition *of false*, but also one *for true* knowledge.

⁴⁸ See also Allison P. Coudert's contribution to this volume, "Melancholy and Madness in the Early Modern West."

⁴⁹ This pertains to both Böhme himself as well as his reception. These positive aspects also distinguish Böhme's depiction of melancholy from the demonic character that may often be found attributed to melancholy in other 16th and 17th century texts (see Coudert, "Melancholy and Madness" [see note 47]), which is not present in the *Aurora* at all. This is only consistent, as again Böhme's God unites the two original principles of the "grimme" and "himmlische Qualität" ("grim" and "heavenly quality") in Himself.

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The Inner Cause and the Better Choice: Anna Maria van Schurman, Self-Fashioning, and the Attraction of the Labadist Religion

For the acclaimed and extraordinary Dutch scholar and artist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678), the seventeenth century truly was the best and the worst of times. On the one hand, this woman's learning and talents were internationally celebrated by her contemporaries throughout much of her life. Conversely, her madness and folly were later vehemently condemned by many of those who had previously praised her. In parallel fashion, many modern scholars applaud this woman for her transgression of gender boundaries, her erudition, and her public accomplishments, but these same academics are often ill at ease discussing the "madness" or intense religious preoccupation of van Schurman during her final years.¹ Some historians have been particularly uncomfortable in explaining this woman's conversion to and defense of the radical Protestant Labadist sect that she joined late in life. Like several of the men of van Schurman's acquaintance, many modern critics associate her religiosity with traditional feminine submission and deference, and thus they view her conversion as a strange aberration from her otherwise manly and publicly-applauded accomplishments. In actuality, however, van Schurman's conversion can be understood as the most purposeful and emancipating event of her life—for it was within the Labadist community that she was finally free, in her own words, to "choose the better part" that embraced her true inner female self. This is not to propose femaleness in an essentialist understanding, but rather selfhood as influenced by early-modern gendered experience in the Dutch Republic. Her self-fashioning in image and text during this period of persecution asserts that her religious transformation was the most consequential event of her life in that it finally allowed her to escape the

¹ Wiesner-Hanks labels van Schurman's call for women's education "conservative," then goes on in derogatory fashion to suggest that this is not surprising considering the fact that she "rejected her earlier learning and argued that reading the Scriptures while guided by the Holy Spirit was all the education any Christian, male or female, needed." Merry E Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (1993; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 160. The manner in which scholars have greatly ignored van Schurman's religious choice is discussed in Mirjam de Baar and Brita Rang, "Anna Maria van Schurman: A Historical Survey of Her Reception Since the Seventeenth Century," *Choosing the Better Part: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)*, ed. Mirjam de Baar, Machteld Löwensteyn, Marit Monteiro, and A. Agnes Sneller (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 19.

traditional patriarchal agendas that had so dominated and dictated her earlier sense of self.

Van Schurman's earlier years began in 1607 when she was born to Dutch Calvinist parents living in Cologne in order to evade religious conflicts in The Netherlands; when she was still young, the family moved back to the Dutch city of Utrecht. Her intellectual abilities were noticed and encouraged from the time that she was very young, and she was taught at school as well as at home with her brothers. Eventually, she became the first female university student at the University of Utrecht, attending classes behind a curtain so as not to disturb the male pupils. Consequently, she soon had many admirers and kept up a scholarly correspondence with illustrious men and women throughout Europe.

In particular, her incredible language skills amazed the great intellectuals of her era. Besides being familiar with the contemporary European languages of Dutch, German, French, English, Spanish, and Italian, she was also writing verse from the age of fifteen in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. And perhaps even more amazingly, she was adept at Oriental languages such as Aramaic, Syriac, Turkish, Arabic, Samaritan, Persian, and Ethiopic. Furthermore, she acquired knowledge of classical philosophy, poetry, rhetoric, dialectics, mathematics, and even medicine. Her achievements received high praise and recognition from the male intelligentsia of her time including the famed poet and moralist Jacob Cats; the Utrecht professor of theology André Rivet; the physician and author Johan van Beverwijck; the scholar, poet, and diplomat Constantijn Huygens; the French philosopher René Descartes; and the theologian and later rector of the university in Utrecht, Gisbertus Voetius.

Her abilities earned her widespread celebrity as she quickly attained the accolades: "Utrecht Pearl," "Star of Utrecht," "Tenth Muse," and "Utrecht Minerva." Indeed, this unmarried woman soon became a tourist attraction, visited by academics and royalty from around Europe.² Thus, van Schurman's early sense of

² An enormous amount of scholarship documenting the life of van Schurman has been published particularly since the 1970s. Perhaps the most thorough introduction to her life is found in Pieta van Beek, *First Female Student: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)*, trans. from *De eerste studente: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)* (2004; Utrecht: Igitur, 2007). Other sources on her life include: *Choosing the Better Part*, ed. De Baar et al. (see note 1); Joyce L. Irwin, "Anna Maria van Schurman: the Star of Utrecht (1607–1678)," *Female Scholars: A Tradition of Learned Women before 1800*, ed. Jean R. Brink (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1980), 68–85; Anna Maria van Schurman, *Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings from Her Intellectual Circle*, trans. and ed. Joyce L. Irwin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Joyce L. Irwin, "Learned Woman of Utrecht: Anna Maria van Schurman" *Women Writers of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson and Frank J. Warnke (Athens: University of Georgia

self was heavily dependent on her interactions with males and the manner in which men glorified themselves and each other. While set apart, she was, nevertheless, meaningfully initiated into the public sphere of manly self-promotion and bravado.

The encouragement and direction of her male contemporaries aided van Schurman from her youth in her attempts to promote her abilities, and in 1636 she was asked to write a Latin poem for the opening of the Utrecht University. Soon afterwards she began a correspondence with the Utrecht professor of theology, André Rivet. These letters were later published in her *Nobiliss. Virginis Annae Mariae A Schurman Dissertatio, de Ingenii Muliebris ad Doctrinam, & meliores Literas aptitudine*, in which she defended a woman's right to an education and her ability to learn. The preface was written by her great supporter van Beverwijck, and both Voetius and Rivet had encouraged her to publish the work. This influential text was first published in Dutch in 1641 and was later translated into Latin, French, and English and was read throughout the European scholarly community. Many of these editions included van Schurman's self-portrait, thus spreading her image and her scholarly reputation far and wide. Although many modern feminists are disturbed that the tract was not progressive enough, for its time, the *Dissertatio* was remarkable in its logic and persuasive insistence that women

Press, 1989); Joyce L. Irwin, "Anna Maria van Schurman and Antoinette Bourignon: Contrasting Examples of Seventeenth-Century Pietism," *Church History* 60 (1990): 301–15; Mirjam de Baar, "En Onder het Hennerot het Haantje Zoekt te Blijven': De Betrokkenheid van Vrouwen bij het Huisgezin van Jean de Labadie 1669–1732," *Vrouwenlevens 1500–1800: Achtste jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis* (Nijmegen: Sun, 1987), 11–43; Barbara Bulckaert, "Vrouw en Eruditie: het Practicum van Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," *Festschrift Miscellanea Jean Pierre van den Branden*, ed. M. Bastiaensen (Brussels: Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 1995), 145–95; Anna Margaretha Hendrika Douma, *Anna Maria van Schurman en de studie der vrouw* (Amsterdam: Proefschrift Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1924); Anne-Marie Korte, "Verandering en continuïteit. Over de ommekeer van Anna Maria van Schurman en Mary Daly," *Mara. Tijdschrift voor feminisme en theologie* 1 (1987): 35–44; Cornelia Niekus Moore, "Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies/ Revue Canadienne d'études néerlandaises* 11 (1990): 25–32; Katlijne van der Stighelen, *Anna Maria van Schurman of 'Hoe hooge dat een maeght kan in de konsten stijgen'* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1987); Barbara Bulckaert, "Self-Tuition and the Intellectual Achievement of Early Modern Women: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," *Women, Education and Agency, 1600–2000*, ed. Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston, and Maureen M. Meikle (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9–24; Bo Karen Lee, "I wish to be nothing: the role of self-denial in the mystical theology of Anna Maria van Schurman," *Women, Gender and Radical Religion in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sylvia Brown (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 189–216; Jeannette Bloem, "The Shaping of a 'Beautiful' Soul: The Critical Life of Anna Maria van Schurman," *Feminism and the Final Foucault*, ed. Dianna Taylor and Karen Vintges (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 15–27.

were equal to men in their ability to think.³ The work is structured in the style of a traditional university dissertation with an opening question to be considered and fourteen theses which are advanced in syllogistic form. First the arguments in favor and the evidences are advanced, and then the objections and their refutations are considered. Hence, in their own scholarly practice, she rationally proposes to the male elites of her time that it is suitable for a woman to engage in intellectual pursuits, and that moreover, it is of great benefit to society for women to be learned.

Another of van Schurman's texts, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica*, was first published in 1648 and reprinted in 1650 and 1652 with the encouragement of the theology professor Friedrich Spanheim the Elder. He persistently asked for permission to publish some of her writings and correspondence, and she finally agreed. Moreover, van Schurman allowed him to edit some of the choices she made for the publication. The text opens with an iconic image of van Schurman after an earlier self-portrait, which includes an inscription indicating that the full marvel of this woman will only be partially revealed in the text. Clearly, she understood that in order to compete in the male public sphere, she had to employ tactics similar to those of a man by publicly pronouncing and demonstrating her capabilities. Therefore, a portion of this text—which mainly consists of her correspondence with contemporary Dutch male elites—is completely devoted to praise of her abilities by acquaintances.

In these verses, she is frequently compared to Minerva, goddess of learning and the arts, but also to Sappho, the venerated Greek poetess whose abilities in philosophy and poetry purportedly caused even Plato to keep a collection of her verses under his pillow. Her contemporaries called her a heroine and an Amazon. While praising van Schurman, these verses also celebrated the city of Utrecht, the home that she had made so famous. However, she also became an impor-

³ While this text was radical in its day, some modern feminists still criticize van Schurman's timidity in allowing that women should not let intellectual pursuits interfere with domestic duties, nor should they use their knowledge to engage in male professions. Angeline Goreau, for example, considers van Schurman's tract to be traditionally negative towards women in its reemphasis on domestic duties for women and its sometimes derogatory comments about women in *The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth Century England* (Garden City, NY: Dial Press, 1985), 164–70. The feminist view that this text was conservative is discussed in De Baar and Rang, *Reception* (see note 1), 19–20 and Irwin, “Star of Utrecht” (see note 2), 83. Caroline van Eck, however, discusses its novel features in “The First Dutch Feminist Tract? Anna Maria van Schurman's Discussion of Women's Aptitude for the Study of Arts and Sciences,” *Choosing the Better Part* (see note 1), 42–53.

tant figure in the cultural memory of the Republic generally. Not only was she celebrated as a scholar, an artist, and a heroine, she was also recognized as a “jewel of the Fatherland.” In this manner, she became a proud patriotic symbol participating in the, predominantly male, mass media structuring of the United Provinces.⁴

In fact, the social media of the era kept the reputation of van Schurman in constant discourse throughout the Golden Age. Her image and praise of her abilities were consistently circulated in a variety of contexts, which ensured a cultural tradition that valued and paid homage to this legendary figure. This constructed visual and textual history created a cultural memory of this famed Dutch woman that would remain influential throughout the seventeenth century regarding perceptions of the ways in which a woman could take on traditionally male traits and abilities, especially intellectual genius and artistic skills. Amazingly, her virtues were still being eulogized at the end of the century in the pamphlet *Spiegel der Goede Vrouwen* (Mirror of Good Women) from 1690, in which she is equated with famed women from antiquity, as well as with Queen Elizabeth I of England.⁵ In the eighteenth century, she continued to be celebrated in both verse and image, and reprints of her writings continued to be published. Thus, even after the “disgrace” of her Labadist conversion and her death, she was resurrected as a cult icon whose abilities clearly argued for the positive aspects of female accomplishment in the male-dominated public sphere.⁶

In introducing the public imaging of van Schurman, it is important to note that many of the portraits of her occur in the print medium, which meant that her legend could be spread widely throughout Europe. The low-cost and portability of prints made them effective communicators for both mass audiences and individuals. Numerous copies were made of her self-portraits and were inserted in her own texts, as well as in the writings of some of her male contemporaries. Furthermore, prints could also function on a very personal level via their size and affordability. As will be discussed, van Schurman frequently bestowed the intimate gift of her self-portrait amongst her several acquaintances of the elites of Europe. Thus, what began as modest self-portraiture soon became a form of very public social media. Through the print medium, the international community developed a tremendous admiration for this amazing woman. Veneration of

⁴ Anna Maria van Schurman, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica* (1648; Trajecti ad Rhenum [Utrecht]: Ex officina Johannis à Waesberge, 1652), 319–64.

⁵ Samuel van der Heiden, , *Apollo gehoond: door een kreupel dicht genaamd Spiegel der Goede Vrouwen*, gereijmt door C. R. (The Hague: Abraham van Geenvliet, 1690).

⁶ De Baar and Rang, *Reception* (see note 1).

her learning and abilities was encouraged via the vast distribution of her portraits and the genius that they signified.

Van Schurman also benefited from this strategic representation of the self in her ability to breach gender boundaries. These gender-bending images included her self-portraits as well as the imaging of her by her male contemporaries. At times her portraits were modest and only meagerly questioned traditional gender boundaries. In other instances, however, this imaging rather brazenly promotes her manly skills and abilities. Van Schurman and the artists of her time adopted male discourse conventions in order to equate her abilities to those of her male colleagues. These strategies were socially useful to van Schurman as she endeavored to negotiate a place for herself in the public sphere. Moreover, she was extremely successful in these maneuvers. In this way, the social construction of the category “woman” could now be a sign for traditionally “male” characteristics, such as intelligent thought, writing ability, artistic skill, and even genius. These were attributes that had not been associated generally with women because of the lack of significant female participation in the public sphere.

In the Netherlands, such breaking of traditional gender norms even resulted in women being encouraged to take up manly pursuits as van Schurman had done. An important example in art is found in Cornelis de Bie's *Het Gulden Cabinet* (1662) which contains the biographies of contemporary artists. De Bie devotes a section of his text to advice for the female artist. Importantly, he advises women to engage in manly artistic pursuits and to leave behind what he considers the more vain and frivolous pursuits of women. His supreme example is van Schurman, who, as he claims, takes great joy in artistic pursuits and derives much fame via her talents. Specifically, he chastises women for foolishly wasting time primping in front of the mirror, and instead he encourages them to engage in the manly pursuit of creating art.⁷

For women artists these traditional associations between women and mirror-gazing vanity were unfortunate because such an activity was a necessity of self-portraiture. As a result, self-representation was extremely problematic for women in the early modern era because they had to overcome a significant cultural bias against the very act of women portraying themselves and thereby achieving fame. Indeed, moralizing *vanitas* images frequently warned against the folly, superficiality, and worldliness of the female nature via women vainly

7 Cornelis de Bie, *Het Gulden Cabinet Vande Edele Vry Schilder-Const: Onstfloten door den lanck ghevvenshten Vrede tusschen de tvree machtighe Croonen van Spaignien En Vrancryck, Waerinne begrepen is den ontsterffelijcken loff vande vermaerste Constminnende Geesten Ende Schilders Van dese Eeuw . . .* (Antwerp: Montfor, 1662), 557–60.

peering into and primping before mirrors. Furthermore, these images warned male viewers of the dangers of alluring women and of the transience of their beauty. Images such as Jacques de Gheyn II's (Fig. 1, 1596) and Jan Miense Molenaer's (Fig. 2, 1633), depictions of *Lady World* picture women preening before their mirrors. They are surrounded by various symbols of evil and folly. The vanity of the women is apparent not only from their mirror gazing, but also in their concern with appearance in terms of fashionable clothing and jewelry. In both images, the apes that could copy human behavior were traditional indicators of foolishness. The ephemeral and worldly nature of the women's vanity is underscored by the signifiers of transience: the drifting and fading smoke emanating from the urn, the fragile bubbles being blown, and the human skull as a representation of death. Numerous negative representations such as these, which associated women and mirrors with vanity, thus problematized the implied mirror gazing necessary for women's self-portraiture. Therefore, women's self-fashioning had to begin in a modest way. Increasingly, however, the public fashioning of van Schurman became quite bold and propagandistic. Mirjam de Baar asserts that this public imaging of van Schurman in her youth was mythical and created by her male contemporaries.⁸ Nevertheless, it is important to remember that van Schurman also participated in this fashioning of herself—particularly in her many self-portraits.

Van Schurman's artistic pursuits apparently began at the insistence of her father who sent her to be trained by Magdalena van de Passe, the daughter of the engraver Crispijn van de Passe the elder. She became skilled at sketching, embroidery, paper cutting, and glass engraving—typical female arts—but she also learned the more masculine techniques of painting, printmaking, and relief sculpture. She produced a large number of portraits and particularly many self-portraits. Most of van Schurman's artistic works date from the 1630s and 1640s, and during that time she devoted much of her effort to portraiture. In 1643 she was admitted to the Utrecht artists's guild, which demonstrates the degree of esteem that her fellow artists (mostly male) had for her abilities. She experimented with several media including paper-cutting, embroidery, oil gouache, pencil, crayon, wax, boxwood, ivory, and copper.⁹ Her artistic accomplishments

⁸ Mirjam de Baar, "Transgressing Gender Codes: Anna Maria van Schurman and Antoinette Bourignon as Contrasting Examples," *Women of the Golden Age: An International Debate on Women in Seventeenth-Century Holland, England and Italy*, ed. Els Kloek, Nicole Teeuwen, and Marijke Huisman (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 143–52.

⁹ Van der Stighelen primarily emphasizes van Schurman's diversity of medium rather than her self-fashioning, but she gives a thorough overview of van Schurman's oeuvre *Schurman* (see note 2).

attracted so much attention that she continued to be lauded in collections of artist biographies for several decades including the previously mentioned text of Cornelis de Bie. Importantly, De Bie particularly praises the glorious van Schurman for engaging in the “male pursuit” of creating art and states that this manly endeavor has won her manly honor.¹⁰ In his text, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (1718), the biographer Arnold Houbraken includes her portrait and compares her renown to that of a number of ancient famed women, including Sappho.¹¹ The effect of these venerating images and biographies, of her writings on female education, and of her own achievements was to have a significant impact on her abilities to garner the praise of many of her male contemporaries. Indeed, it was primarily for the public, male sphere of her time that she was attempting to fashion a self-identity of genius and international fame.

Evidence that van Schurman was struggling with the dilemma of mirroring herself in a male-dominated artistic tradition is evident in a 1633 self-portrait etching; the inscription states that she had not created this image in the service of pride in her beauty but because she considered it to be a simple beginning exercise in the art of printmaking (Fig. 3).¹² She is depicted in a half-length pose behind a large, decorative cartouche that contains her Latin inscription. In spite of her modest verse, she also clearly intended the creation of this self-portrait to be the means of enhancing and spreading her fame. The format of the print with its ostentatious cartouche is reminiscent of glorifying male portraiture of the era as seen, for example, in an engraved portrait of the artist Hans Bol by Hendrik Goltzius (1593) (Fig. 4). In Goltzius’s portrait, two putti figures allegorizing art are shown drawing and one of them examines his features in a mirror to create a self-portrait. It is clear, therefore, that such mirror gazing and glorifying of men was perfectly acceptable in Dutch culture. And it was this gender discrimination that van Schurman was trying to overcome in her own assertive, yet appropriately modest, self-imaging. The fact that she sent the portrait to a number of the Dutch elites including the Dutch antiquarian Aernout van Buchel and Constan-

¹⁰ De Bie, *Gulden Cabinet* (see note 7).

¹¹ Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen: waar van 'er vele met hunne beeltenissen ten tooneel verschynen, en hun levensgedrag en konstwerken beschreven worden: zynde een vervolg op het schilderboek van K. v. Mander*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: published by the author, 1718), 313–16.

¹² *Non animi fastus, nec formae gratia suasit
Vultus aeterno sculpere in aere meos:
Sed, si forte rudis stilus hic meliora negaret,
Tentarem prima ne potiora vice.*

tijn Huygens, illustrates her desire to proclaim her fame within the male-dominated arena of mutual male congratulatory eulogizing. The later praise of these Dutch male elites and their poems on the image are indicative of van Schurman's success in promoting herself amongst the men of letters of her time.¹³ Certainly, she must have been aware of the power-enhancing capabilities that the print medium afforded. In particular, she must have realized the enormous social power of widely-dispersible etchings in establishing her abilities competitively in the male-dominated public sphere.

In 1640, van Schurman created another self-portrait etching that once again is a somewhat paradoxical combination of bold self-fashioning and appropriate feminine modesty (Fig. 5). She depicts herself in a half-length pose set within an oval frame that also carries an inscription with her name and age. She includes a verse below the image that reads:

Cernitis hic picta nostros in imagine vultus:
Si negat ars formam, gratia vestra dabit.

[See my likeness depicted in this portrait;
May your favor perfect the work where art has failed.]

The oval format with inscription is once again dependent on male portraits used to celebrate the accomplishments of her contemporaries. An example is found in a portrait print of Jacob Cats by Willem Jacobs Delff after Michiel Jans van Miervelt (Fig. 6). It is this self-portrait by van Schurman that became the model for many future glorifying images. It was used, for example, as the title plate for her previously discussed text *Opuscula*. As already mentioned, however, the inscribed verse was changed to a much bolder pronouncement of van Schurman's abilities.

This same emboldening of her image is particularly evident in a much more audacious self-portrait (Fig. 7) designed by van Schurman and included in Jacob Cats's dedication to her at the outset of his text *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-steen van den Selven* (The World's Beginning, Middle and End, Comprised in the Wedding Ring, With the Touch Stone of the Same). Accompanying the image is an inscription proclaiming her fame and glory and also a page-long description of all her talents in learning, art, and music.¹⁴ The celebratory view of the Utrecht church out the arched window

¹³ Van Beek, *First Female Student* (see note 2), 35–36.

¹⁴ Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken, So ouden als nieuwe, van de Heer Iacob Cats, Ridder, oudt Raedt-pensionaris van Hollandt, &c.* (Amsterdam: Ian Iacobsz Schipper, 1655), Forward to *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-steen van den Selven*. In his

is a reminder of the civic pride attached to van Schurman and her fame. She is shown surrounded by scholarly texts as symbols of manly learning and prestige. And a glorifying cloth of honor, or baldachin, has now been added over her head, which recalls heroic male portraits such as that of William I by Willem Jacobs Delff after Adriaen van de Venne (Fig. 8). Significantly, van Schurman's glorified self-portrait reappeared in multiple editions of Cats's *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven* (first published in 1637) and in his collected works, thus disseminating her powerful image throughout the Dutch Republic. In fact, in later editions of Cats's collected works, the entire anthology is dedicated to van Schurman in memory of her intellectual abilities.

A certain indicator of van Schurman's growing fame in the Dutch Republic is found in a text by Johan van Beverwijck, *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts* [On the Excellence of the Female Sex] which defends the courage, abilities, and intelligence of women and even argues at times that women are superior to men. Van Beverwijck's positive text on women, published twice during the seventeenth century in 1639 and 1643, incorporated many of his famous female contemporaries in the form of descriptions, poems, and eulogies. Van Schurman, however, is eulogized above all others in van Beverwijck's text. Indeed, he dedicated the second book of his text to this renowned woman and he included a very lengthy verse that equates her with Greek goddesses—particularly with Pallas Minerva, goddess of the arts and learning.¹⁵ Van Beverwijck also included in his dedication a portrait of van Schurman after her earlier self-portrait (Fig. 9). Entwined around the frame above her head are triumphant laurel leaves that recall signifiers used in traditional male portraiture. Willem Jacobs Delff's portrait of Hugo Grotius, after Michiel Jans van Mierevelt, for example, shows the

dedication, Cats states that the image is a self-portrait, but it is not known if van Schurman engraved the work or whether it was simply done after her drawing. It is important to recall that van Schurman did make other self-portrait prints. Cats's inscription reads, "Nu soo isset alsoo dat niet alleen de hooghe Schole van het Sticht van Utrecht, maer oock menigh geleert man in Hollant met volle reden van wetenschap kan getuygen, dat al het gene voren is verhaelt, gelijckelick is te vinden in den persoon van Jonck-vrou *Anna Maria Schuermans*: wiens beelt na 't leven by haer selfs uyt een spiegel kunstelick geteyckent wy den Leser hier in 't koper ghesneden gunstelick mede-deelen; als een wonder niet alleen van onse, maer oock van de voorige eeuwen. En daer op besluytende, segge ick: *O licht van uwen tijt, en Peerel van den douck! Ghy die ons Eeuwe ciert, verciert oock desen Bouck.*

¹⁵ These comments are found in the dedication of Johan van Beverwijck, *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts Verciert met Historyen, ende kopere Platen; als oock Latijnsche, ende Nederlansche Verssen van Mr. Corn. Boy* (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1643).

celebrated philosopher, jurist, poet, and theologian similarly crested with such branches (Fig. 10). The engraver of her image may also have taken inspiration from seeing van Schurman's wood carving of herself crowned with a laurel wreath (Fig. 11). Clearly she was aspiring to the greatness of the male elites with such an ennobling and bold adornment. The print in van Beverwijck's text contains a verse which also brazenly proclaims her glory by asserting that her wisdom cannot be achieved by the most respectable or bravest of men.

Siet hier de wijste Maeght
Daer van de Weerelt Waeght;
Daer van de Braefste Man
Het Slechste niet en Kan.

[See here the wisest maid
Who the world speaks about;
The most respectable/courageous man
Cannot equal her worst.]

In its gender comparison, this inscription is very audacious in its assertion that her abilities surpass those of men and that her fame is known far and wide. Such a non-traditional opinion regarding a woman and her capabilities must certainly have aided van Schurman in her attempts to compete in the male-dominated discourses of arts and letters.

A painted portrait of this famed woman also indicates that her skills were being proclaimed in a very manly fashion. In the portrait of van Schurman by Jan Lievens (1649), her erudition is symbolized by including her tools of pen and ink and a book (Fig. 12). But perhaps even more depolarizing is her dress. She wears a type of robe that was rather exclusively found in portraits of male scholars of the seventeenth century, such as Michiel Jans van Mierevelt's portrait of Jacob Cats or, indeed, in Lievens's own self portrait.¹⁶ Thus, the fur-trimmed robe bestows on van Schurman similar characteristics of male intellect and genius. Prints made after this painting further mythologized the genius and capabilities of this illustrious woman.

In similarly lauding fashion, an engraving by Cornelis van Dalen de Jonge after Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen, ca. 1660 (Fig. 13), uses male portrait prototypes to proclaim the glory of van Schurman. Indeed, it is very reminiscent of such prints as Hendrick Goltzius's portrait of Dirck Volkerts Coornhert (ca. 1592) (Fig. 14). Coornhert, the famed Dutch philosopher, theologian, writer, and pol-

¹⁶ The meaning of this robe is discussed by Ellen O'Neil Rife, "The Exotic Gift and the Art of the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic," Ph.D. diss., The University of Kansas, 2013, 172–212.

itician is shown surrounded by instruments of learning and writing, of art and music, and of governance and affairs of state. An inscription trumpeting his fame is included below. In similar fashion, signifiers of van Schurman's accomplishments and renown are present in the depicted book, cloth of honor, view of the Utrecht cathedral tower, as well as in the aggrandizing inscription by Constantijn Huygens. The inscription proclaims her as a goddess and praises her scholarly and artistic skills.¹⁷ Instruments of learning: books, manuscripts, writing implements, and a globe; art: palette, brushes, drawings, and a painting; and music: a lute, surround the circular frame signifying her genius and her achievements.

In order to understand the power of these images more fully and their ability to thrust van Schurman and her skills into the public arena of male self-congratulatory discourse, it is important to further theorize about the influence and meaning of the medium in seventeenth-century Dutch culture generally. It is important to understand how this new reproductive medium functioned in what was perhaps the first modern consumer culture. In the seventeenth century the Dutch were establishing a standard of commodification and spectacle that became the envy of all Europe. The many representations of luxury goods in the visual culture of the time created and fulfilled a longing and desire to own these objects.¹⁸ Similarly then, owning representations of the celebrities of the era via the accessible portrait print established a type of personal intimacy with these illustrious individuals.

The effect of these powerful images, and of van Schurman's example of "manly" learning and skill, was to have significant implications for gender discourse throughout the seventeenth century. Indeed, the mass-media portrait prints of this famous woman were some of the earliest to exploit the possibilities of this new self-promotional medium. Clearly, she understood the fame-enhancing possibilities of the portrait print when she inserted her self-portrait at the beginning of her many editions of *Opuscula*. In addition, it is clear that she further managed the enhancement of her reputation by carefully distributing her self-portraits amongst intellectuals throughout Europe.¹⁹

17 *Tanta fides cato, tanta est fiducia, diva
Hocceine Shurmanna, vultus in vere micet.
Disce gravis sculptor qua sit vesania capti.
Hac, ais, hac ari sisoris umbra tui est.
Tun similem prastis atas cui nulla secundam
Didit et non est ulla datura parem.*

18 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corp. and Penguin Books, 1972).

19 Van Beek's text is particularly useful in tracing the many instances of van Schurman distributing her self-portraits, *First Female Student* (see note 2), 161–63, 168, 173.

Insight into van Schurman's successful negotiations in disseminating her image and her fame as one of the celebrities of her era can be gleaned from a letter written by an English member of Parliament, Simonds d'Ewes, in which he thanks this famous young woman from Utrecht for the five self-portraits that she sent him. He meted out the portraits amongst his family members but saved one for himself that, as he tells her, will be "... placed between portraits of other persons of excellent fame." The French poet Jean de Peyrarède not only collected one of her self-portraits, he also composed a eulogizing verse which he printed beneath her image: "When van Schurman painted her own face, she simultaneously painted Minerva, the Graces, and the Muses." This action evidences the manner in which prints almost served as private relics at times, in that the poet is clearly paying devotion to her image. One final example of the fame-enhancing power of the new portrait print is found in the collection of Italian scholar and collector Cassiano dal Pozzo. He acquired one of van Schurman's portraits and hung it in the gallery of scholars in his home in Rome where the Academy of Science met. This was an amazing tribute, especially in view of the fact that women were not yet admitted to the Academy.

In 1664 the international reputation of this renowned scholar and artist took a dramatic plunge when she made the acquaintance of the preacher Jean de Labadie, a Jesuit who had converted to Protestantism. In a move that shocked her contemporaries, she joined the radical Labadist sect and moved with them to Amsterdam where she became one of the staunchest defenders of the persecuted religion. She remained with the group as they were forced from city to city, and she later became part of their leadership and was known as the mother of their community.

Jean de Labadie was born in France in 1610. He was educated by the Jesuits at Bordeaux, joined their order in 1625, and was ordained in 1635.²⁰ In 1639 he left the order due to conflicts with his brethren over his various spiritual manifestations and visions. Labadie promoted principles of social righteousness and having all things in common. Furthermore, his own personal spiritual experiences caused him to advocate inner piety and enlightenment that would bring about a spiritual rebirth. Eventually, his ideas caused him to leave the Catholic faith entirely, and in 1650 he joined the Reformed Church. This conversion took him to

20 For general biography of Labadie and a discussion of his teachings, see Trevor John Saxby, *The Quest for the New Jerusalem, Jean de Labadie and the Labadists, 1610–1744* (Dordrecht and Boston: M. Nijhoff Publishers, 1987); Michel de Certeau, *La Fable Mystique: XVIe–XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Daniel Vidal, *Jean de Labadie, 1610–1674: Passion Mystique et Esprit de Réforme* (Grenoble: Millon, 2009).

Geneva where he established Bible study groups in order to critique established Christianity and to interpret scripture for the purpose of practical discipleship. Eventually he was sent to the city of Middelburg in the Dutch Republic; however, he refused to recognize the authority of the Reformed Church and later founded a separate sect. He was expelled from the city and went to Amsterdam where van Schurman and several other women from prominent families joined his congregation. These women included Burgomaster van Beuningen's sister; Anna, Maria, and Lucia Aerssen van Sommelsdyck; Aemilie and Vincentia van der Haer; and Anna de Veer and Wihelmina van Buytendyck. Some sixty members of the sect lived together in three adjoining houses and had all things in common. Persecution eventually drove them to Herford, Germany where they were given haven by Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate, but once again they were banished from this city and subsequently relocated to Altona, near Hamburg, where Labadie died in 1674.

Finally, about 150 Labadists, including van Schurman, migrated to Wieuwerd in Friesland (west of Groningen near Leeuwarden), where they grew in size to several hundred members. They set up their community in the Walta Castle which belonged to the three sisters of the van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family. The three women were adherents to the Labadist religion, and Labadie had married the youngest sister Lucia. After Labadie's death, she married the new leader of the group, Pierre Yvon. Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck was the brother to these three women; he bought out their shares in the estate and allowed the group to stay on the property without charge. In addition to the castle, the grounds contained a great deal of farm land plus mills and a smithy. Soon it grew to the size of a small village with farms and gardens, bakeries and breweries, and an apothecary and printing press.

A few persons of note came to visit and observe the community including William Penn and John Locke. Other persons of renown who came to join the Labadists included the artist and scientist Maria Sibylla Merian and the doctor and scientist Hendrik van Deventer. The Labadists also attempted to establish sister communities elsewhere. One of these was a community established in Suriname called Providence. They had been invited to Suriname by Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck who was the first governor from 1683 until 1688.²¹

In their doctrinal teaching, the Labadists laid great stress on the necessity of interior illumination by the spirit for the understanding of the Bible. The Church for them was a community of holy persons who have experienced a new spiritual birth. Only these individuals were entitled to partake of the sacraments. They

²¹ Saxby, *Jean de Labadie* (see note 20).

declared that marriage with an unregenerate person was not binding, they held property in common, and they supported themselves by manual labor. In spite of the fact that members were to eschew worldly fame, scholarly pursuits that glorified God were encouraged. Van Schurman continued to produce art, and she published her important last piece of scholarship, *Eukleria* (1673), during her life with the community.²² This work was part defense of the Labadist faith and part autobiography. It was highly celebrated amongst members of the sect.

Although Van Schurman enjoyed acclaim amongst her fellow Labadists, her reputation outside of the sect suffered a severe decline. Her former mentors wrote that she had gone mad and had fallen under the persuasive influence of an evil French heretic.²³ In a poetic letter to van Schurman, Constantijn Huygens, asks her in a very patronizing tone what demon has taken her away from her male supporters.²⁴

Heeft Voetius dien danck verdient voor lange moeyt,
Die u de goede melck, daer van ghij sijt gegroeyt
Tot grooter mannen waerd' van jongs heeft leeren drincken?
Heeft Uytrecht dat verdient, en alle die daer blincken
Als Hoogschool-fackelen in die geleerde Stadt?

[Has Voetius deserved these thanks for his years of toil,
having taught you to drink the nourishing milk
on which you have thrived to equal great men?
Has Utrecht deserved this, and all who shine there
as torches of Academe in that learned city?]²⁵

Significantly then, Huygens associates her “irrational” spiritual choice with her decided rejection of her identity as one of the “great men” of her era. He also labels it a disgrace for the reputation of Utrecht and its university. Indeed, it is the rejection of manly fame and patriarchal social morality that Huygens most

22 Anna Maria van Schurman, *Eukleria seu melioris partis electio: Tractatus brevem vitæ ejus delineationem exhibens* (Altona: Ex officina Cornelii van der Meulen, 1673).

23 Some claimed that she ate spiders, which was a way of saying that she had gone mad. De Baar and Rang, *Reception* (see note 1), 7.

24 A. Agnes Sneller says that the turning against “us” may refer to the Reformed church. She also suggests that including van Schurman in this designation of young women indicates that Huygens no longer viewed her as a mature and rational equal in “‘If She Had Been a Man . . .’ Anna Maria van Schurman in the Social and Literary Life of Her Age,” *Choosing the Better Part* (see note 1), 132–49.

25 Translations and discussions of those who turned against van Schurman are found in van Beek, *First Female Student* (see note 2), 222–27.

correlates with the “madness” of her religious decision. Hence, as Foucault has suggested in his history of insanity, *Madness and Civilization*, much of what constituted a judgment of madness in the past was determined by patriarchal political structures and moral practices.²⁶

Huygens also complains that Labadie, a “French cock,” has persuaded many young women to follow his evil path. Such insinuations made by Huygens about inappropriate sexual relations between Labadie (the cock) and his female followers were further promoted by other men of the era.²⁷ A number of van Schurman’s former male supporters begged her to change her mind about Labadie including Lodensteyn and Saldenus. The Utrecht professor, Johannes Graevius, wrote a letter typical of the consternation of many:

Our van Schurman has not only renounced all studies of letters, but has also sold her possessions, and has departed from this city, which she has revered for so many years. She has pursued a certain French fanatic by name of De Labadie. The Walloon Synod as well as the magistrate of Middelburg have removed him from office on grounds of heterodoxy . . . He has now settled in Amsterdam and has seduced many by a strange, unctuous piety. They yield to his discipline and are hanging on his lips day and night. It is rumoured that they have formed some or other community à la Pythagoras or a community of property . . . This is the group that our Anna Maria has joined.

Once again, it appears that van Schurman’s “madness” was defined by her rejection of her manly pursuits and by the public shame that she brought upon her city.

Many men in the hierarchy of the reformed church worried that her actions would cause a great schism within the church. Several church and political officials wrote about the scandal. Voetius, her former teacher immediately decried Labadie and presented to his students arguments against the sect. The reformed pastor Jacobus Koelman claimed that van Schurman had turned from rational thought in order to follow Labadie because she was driven by her “womanly passions and her womanly temper.” Such a statement is another indicator that men associated her madness with her renunciation of male reason, which she had so clearly embodied and demonstrated in the past.

What, then, could have possibly compelled this woman of renown to sacrifice her reputation and join the difficult life of the persecuted Labadist community? A number of responses have been proposed to answer this question. Like many

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (1961; London: Tavistock, 1961). For further discussion of Foucault’s thesis, see Allison P. Coudert’s contribution to this volume.

²⁷ De Baar, “Transgressing” (see note 8), 150.

of her contemporaries, modern scholars also see her as having been deluded by the seductive Labadie while others argue that her comments witness a sincere dissatisfaction with the church. Some claim that her years in seclusion caring for her relatives caused a deep dissatisfaction with life that was healed by the sect. Furthermore, the suggestion has been made that her desire for martyrdom pushed her toward this tremendous sacrifice of her international fame.²⁸

In addition to these personal factors, the equalizing of all adherents of the faith and allowing all to speak and participate in meetings must have been characteristics that would have drawn women, and particularly talented and independent women, to the Labadist community. Furthermore, Labadie's emphasis on personal prayer and personal mystical devotion allowed women greater power over their own worship without the need of patriarchal interference. These aspects would have been particularly crucial for a single woman.

While all these benefits may well have contributed to her initial interest in Labadism, it is imperative that more serious attention be given to van Schurman's spiritual perspective and to a consideration of how this connects to her specific socio-cultural, religious, philosophical, artistic, and gender milieu. Scholars have generally glossed over her Labadist pursuits as inexplicable deviations from her more serious avocations. Instead, I would suggest that her spirituality was intrinsic to her self-identification as a religious, scholarly, and artistic being. Establishing these various contexts enables us to better understand the discourses regarding gender, madness, religion, and science circling around this woman of prominence.

Incredibly, ancient biological discussions regarding the female mind and body were still in vogue in seventeenth-century Europe.²⁹ In brief, the first of these supposedly related to the four humors that were governed by bodily fluids and which determined gender characteristics. Women were associated with the cold and wet humors and were thus made more passive and changeable than men. If women unnaturally abandoned their passive role, there was a danger that they would join with the devil in order to gain power over men. Their cold and wet humors also made them susceptible to lust and to the sexual advances of the devil—thus witchcraft was viewed as a constant danger. As late as mid-sixteenth

²⁸ Van Beek gives an overview of these explanations and adds her own ideas about martyrdom in *First Female Student* (see note 2), 227–28.

²⁹ A history of biology and medicine concerning women is discussed in Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender* (see note 1), 34–39; Laurinda S. Dixon, *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

through mid-seventeenth century, there were more witchcraft trials than in the whole history of Western Europe.

Furthermore, medical discussions regarding the wandering womb that originated in ancient Greece were still being used as explanations for the “natural” hysteria, irrationality, and emotionalism generally associated with women. It has been argued that even the general lay population would have been aware of these long-held notions regarding women’s biology. In the sixteenth century, doctors such as Paracelsus, Johan Meyer, and Ambroise Pare tried to differentiate between hysteria caused by witchcraft and that caused by biological or mental weakness on the part of women.³⁰ Supposedly, these medical conditions were amplified when women were not joined in regular sexual relations with husbands, so female communities were considered particularly dangerous in relation to hysteria, madness, and witchcraft. Hysteria, which was only associated with women, made females who did not follow traditional social norms particularly suspect and problematic.

This medical etiology is important in understanding how and why van Schurman’s male contemporaries accused her of madness. The critics of Labadism were able to construct a view of the cult with Labadie as a satanic figure that had seduced irrational females into joining his household due to their vulnerable and hysterical natures. This myth was an important device in being able to discredit the cult, its leader, and even the famous female members.³¹ And specifically, van Schurman amongst the Labadist women was particularly marked for male criticism. She had blatantly done those things in life that encouraged hysteria—not marrying and engaging in sexual relations, taking on male roles, and filling her mind with scholarship that was beyond her sex. Previously, these life choices had not been problematic for her male contemporaries because she modestly followed the rules of male pursuits. Her transgression of gender boundaries was allowed because she was not overly boastful and she allowed the men to sing her praises as their equal. However, when she no longer modestly excused her faults and when she instead boldly proclaimed her emancipation from the male hierarchy of the church and the university, she was viewed as a hysteric.

Another important contextual aspect of this era has to do with discourses examining women, religion, and reason. Recent research has uncovered numerous examples of how significantly women shaped not only the female worship experience but also the universal Christian experience. In regards to this discussion, it has been argued that the Reformation helped to loosen traditional

³⁰ See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

³¹ De Baar, “Labadie” (see note 2).

social and gender boundaries, as women began to participate in theological debates. Specifically, women played a significant role in shaping the tenets of various radical Protestant sects in the “further reformation.”³² At this historical moment, the millenarian movement associated with many of these sects revived the passage in Joel declaring that women would prophesy. Some analysts suggest that these female insertions into theological discourse enabled women in a type of proto-feminism.

It is argued that when women could reimagine their relationship with God by asserting unmediated access to divine wisdom, they necessarily reimagined their relationship with others in the world. They could occupy a potentially new place with respect to culture, authority, and history. This intense religiosity on the part of women, however, was deemed dangerous by men in some Protestant cultures and was associated with madness. Indeed, women had frequently and negatively been associated with mysticism and religious fanaticism in post-Reformation northern Europe. Protestant male theologians particularly criticized the visions of Catholic female saints such as St. Theresa of Avila.

An intriguing parallel to van Schurman in this regard proves to be the North German female poet Anna Ovena Hoyers (1584–1655) who was basically forced to leave her home and country because, apart from her financial troubles, the orthodox Protestant clerics could not tolerate her innovative and critical ideas about religion and the Church which claimed absolute authority over the proper interpretation of the Bible since the publication of the Formula of Concord in 1580.³³

Furthermore, in an era increasingly dominated by Cartesian rationalism, women were not viewed as equals in this dualistic model. It was asserted that the male mind was more capable of rational thought and could thus govern the physical body in an orderly way. By contrast, the female mind was thought to be governed by emotionalism and thus incapable of orderly governance. Typically, reason was associated with the mental, the cultural, the universal, the public,

32 Joyce L Irwin, *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism, 1525–1675* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1979).

33 Becker-Cantarino, *Annae Ovenae Hoiyers Geistliche und Weltliche Poemata*. Rpt. of the ed. Amsterdam 1650, ed. and with an epilogue by Barbara Becker-Cantarino (1986; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2011), 1*–200*; Albrecht Classen, “Die ‘Querelle des femmes’ im 16. Jahrhundert im Kontext des theologischen Gelehrtenstreits. Die literarischen Beiträge von Argula von Grumbach und Anna Ovena Hoyers,” *Wirkendes Wort* 50.2 (2000): 189–213. See now Classen’s summary and further exploration of her works in “Anna Ovena Hoyers,” 500 Jahre Reformation: Von Frauen gestaltet” (www.frauen-und-reformation.de; specifically: <http://frauen-und-reformation.de/?s=bi-o&id=74> (last accessed on March 18, 2014).

and the male, whereas emotion was associated with the irrational, the physical, the natural, the particular, the private, and the female.³⁴

In consideration of these discourses, it becomes evident that rejecting male rationalism and embracing female spirituality is what van Schurman had in mind when she spoke of “choosing the better part” in *Eukleria*. First, however, she had to argue against her learned male critics, so she transformed Labadie’s sermons into a new religious doctrine and system that she defended with the techniques of intellectual disputation. Furthermore, she referenced numerous authoritative sources including the Bible, classical literature, Augustine, and Calvin. Her rational arguments attempted to refute the critiques which asserted she had gone mad and that she had given up her scholarly pursuits.

Nevertheless, while she made her arguments in a logical, orderly way for the persuasion of her male readers, she also transcended the rational to embrace the spiritual and “feminine” within herself. Arguing against the new vogue of Cartesian philosophy, she points out that knowledge is deeper and wider than that which is produced by rational thought. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of phenomena and the manner in which it reveals God. She describes the onset of her mystical enlightenment as she comes to know the inner cause, or God. And it is only through his grace and spiritual manifestations that she develops a full knowledge of the divine. In rejection of her manly and scholarly accomplishments, she proclaims, “I am indeed now of the persuasion that the slightest experience of the love of God gives us a truer and deeper understanding of the sacred page than does the most complete knowledge of the sacred language itself.”³⁵ Interestingly, her discussions are at times as mystical as the occult writings of Catholic women during this era. She celebrates those spiritual and irrational phenomena associated with the female such as Nature and the Spirit:

If, however, the teachers are truly taught by God and are instructed and led by the strength of his Spirit, three books are more than sufficient for them, namely the book of Scripture, the book of Nature, and the book of inward grace, in order to know God and themselves—and thus also humankind—thoroughly; in this knowledge all true wisdom is located . . .

Furthermore, van Schurman denigrates patriarchal reason and those who employ it:

³⁴ See the contributions to *Women and Reason*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Kathleen Okruhlik (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

³⁵ All excerpts and translations from *Eukleria* are taken from Irwin, *Writings* (see note 2), 73–94.

Thus it is for them not the sword of the Spirit but an empty sheath or rather an iron sword in the hand of a fool, with which they wound themselves and others while mixing their own corrupt reason with divine matters and raise it up as administrant, interpreter, and judge of Holy Scripture. As much as in them lies, they thereby dislodge the Holy Spirit from his throne and turn the weapons of erudition against the simplicity of faith. But as regards their elenchtic or eristic exercises (to use scholastic terms in scholastic matters), they often erect a theater pleasing to the devil, since he not seldom presides at their disputations and forges or supplies arms or arguments for his champions of errors to fight truth; he provides them material to nourish ambition, envy, anger, and other such monsters of the human heart or else to establish the reign of and love for reason and human argumentation, by which he may then triumph, if not in full, certainly in part, over the actors in the kind of pretense. And those who think they have turned out victors will find they have attained nothing except human assent or, in any event, the stopping of the mouth and restraining of the tongue of their adversary. For it is not that anyone should believe that truth is established or anyone correctly taught by human reasonings or artificial arguments or that errors can truly and in a wholesome manner be overcome through subtle disputations. For it is not a divine faith that depends on human reason, and the devil does not find it difficult to weaken the convictions of reason by new stratagems. Whatever the so-called angelic doctor may assert concerning the defense of religion by reason unless it is established by the grace of God, I know for certain the one argument that is most effective against the errors of atheists or contentious men is a blameless life striking by the brightness of Christian virtues.

The male scholars referenced in this diatribe against contentious, egotistical reason stand in notable gendered contrast to the “she” of the next sentence in which van Schurman celebrates “woman” as the example of Christian virtues: “Such was that holy martyr in England who denied that she was able to dispute for Christ but confirmed strongly by words and deed itself that she was able to die for him.” The woman referred to is most likely the Protestant martyr Anne Askew (1520/21–1546) who rejected rational disputation as a means to defend her faith but instead offered her life as evidence of her faith in Christ. It is significant that van Schurman chose Askew as her model of Christian virtue. In John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, later known as *The Book of Martyrs*, first published in 1563, Askew is celebrated as one of the most bold of martyrs. When she was asked to provide her interpretations of biblical passages, she replied, “I would not throw pearls amongst swine, for acorns were good enough.”³⁶ When she went to her execution, her courage served as a model to the three men burned with her so that they too could face death with fearlessness and faith. Therefore, she was not the typically submissive female martyr; she boldly responded to her persecutors and she bravely endured their tyranny.

³⁶ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. Rev. George Townsend (1563; New York: AMS Press, 1965), 29.

It is not surprising that van Schurman enthusiastically identified with this martyr as she was in the midst of dauntlessly confronting her own male antagonists and of fearlessly striking out against their patriarchal practices. Thus, within the Labadist community van Schurman was finally able to escape the strictures of “rational” male thought to which she had always been schooled; she was finally free to express her spirituality and emotionalism in ways that were deemed “irrational” by her critics.

As mentioned, there are many instances in the autobiographical section of the text in which van Schurman renounces her earlier male-dominated self-fashioning. She makes a dramatic break from her scholarly past and claims that these earlier works were shameful and offensive. And she says that she will now make the truth known which she has learned from actual experience:

Although quite often a certain hidden ground of conscience protested, nevertheless, under the appearance of some virtue or duty and the supposed common good of learning, I have allowed myself to be led step by step into that theater of a more conspicuous fame, from which the departure has been difficult. I do not know through what carelessness or blindness of mind I have furnished an argument, that is to say, an occasion for literary idolatry, of which all who cultivate vainglory are guilty. Lying eulogists, as someone has not unfairly called them, as they sing each other's praises, transform themselves into mere animals, living for glory. I recognize that I was caught in this grossest of faults by certain extravagant singers of my praises . . . I retract all those writings of mine which exude such a shameful slackness in my soul, or, if you will, a vain and worldly spirit. I no longer recognize them as mine. Also, I hereby reject and remove far from myself as alien to my condition and profession all the writings of others, especially the panegyric poems, which are marked with that sign of vainglory and godlessness.

Hence, she understands that her knowledge of self and her relationship to God now comes through her experiences as a spiritual woman. She no longer needs the models of men to fashion her self-identity. She recalls that her spiritual urgings began at a very young age but that no one seemed to take note of these virtues. Instead, they “judged nothing worthy of observing and celebrating except what was rare in our sex and valued for that reason.” She further laments that she did not protect herself from the “vainglory of men.” In other words, she realizes that she was not celebrated unless she was like the men who praised her. Thus, she abandoned her gendered self to win the acclaim of men, for it was only their opinion that was socially meaningful.

Consequently, as has been noted by a few scholars, *Eukleria* is the boldest of all of her writings. It does not contain any of the modest female apologies found in her earlier texts or images, but instead she fearlessly seizes her right to discuss these matters according to her own thoughts. She publishes the work under her own name and her own authority, and there is no preface by an authoritative male

friend like van Beverwijck or Spanheim.³⁷ She aggressively speaks out against her male detractors using their own argumentative strategies and insists that she has indeed chosen a better path. This path was the antithesis of all that she had been schooled in by her circle of lettered men. It was a liberated celebration of her right as a woman to meditate and analyze according to her female identity. It is van Schurman's text—not the writing of Labadie or of his successor Yvon—that truly and cogently sets forth the doctrines of the sect. Significantly, she rarely references Labadie and Yvon in the text. Hence, without male direction she was able to formulate her own religious thinking in a free and self-referential manner that was published without contradiction. Indeed, it is freedom that she constantly references in her call for all Christians to divest themselves of the conceit of the world and to focus on the Spirit that will testify of God. And what was it that she sought freedom from: freedom from the patriarchal dictates of the church and of the university.

Jeannette Bloem links van Schurman's textual self-fashioning in *Eukleria* to Foucault's concept of "self-care."³⁸ She argues that for Foucault, artistic and literary enterprises are processes by which the self becomes more aware of itself. The author engages with the self as a means of caring for and understanding the self. In this manner, the created self is more a reality of the self than when the manner of self-fashioning is imposed from outside. Through the writing of *Eukleria*, van Schurman was able to change her mind about church dogma. She was able to refute the arguments of the male hierarchy within the church and to replace these with her experiences as a female self. She did not shrink from expressing the happiness she experienced via her unique spiritual understanding of God and his goodness. Thus, she was able to achieve for herself a state of fulfillment and joy in her newly acquired self-knowledge and her relationship to this "inner cause."

Van Schurman's self-portrait of this period is equally revolutionary in its departure from traditional patriarchal eulogizing (Fig. 15). The original painted image no longer exists, but a print was made after it by Jan van Munnikhuysen that was later printed by Jan van de Velde IV as the title plate to *Eukleria*. Here she portrays herself without all the trappings that had earlier served to glorify her accomplishments. Other than the word "pinxit," which serves to identify van Schurman as the original artist, there are no other references to her skills. Her name and her birth and death dates (added posthumously) that are inscribed on the oval frame are the only embellishment on this otherwise extremely plain

37 Mirjam de Baar, "'Now as for the Faint Rumours of Fame Attached to My Name . . . ' The *Eukleria* as Autobiography," *Choosing the Better Part* (see note 1), 100

38 Bloem, "The Critical Life" (see note 2).

image. The books and manuscripts that had earlier signified her outstanding scholarship are gone, as are the cloth of honor and the Utrecht cathedral that had emphasized her international fame. She portrays herself in very modest fashion with a voluminous cap over her hair and a high-necked, unadorned blouse and cloak. Her face is un-idealized and shows her age. Her piercing gaze echoes the serious meditative quality of *Eukleria*. Significantly, the anonymous inscription added below is a powerful summation of the change that had occurred in her life.

Siet hier de Eedle maegt, genaemt weergadeloos,
 Eer sy voor 's werelst lof het beste deel verkoos,
 Sy was als saemgesteld van Wyshey, Geest en Deugd,
 Haar Liefde was gekruyst' het Kruys was hare vreugd.
 Kunst, Talen Wetenschap: geleertheyt, Groothey, Eer,
 Met blijtschap ley sy 't al voor Christi voeten neer.

[See here the noble maid, called matchless,
 She was a model of wisdom, spirit, and virtue,
 Her love was crucified, the cross was her joy.
 Arts, the knowledge of languages: learning, greatness, honor
 With joy she laid it down before the feet of Christ.]

In this manner, the art and the text of *Eukleria* combine as a “mad” rejection of van Schurman’s past self and the patriarchal strictures and control she had once endured and even embraced. The Labadists produced this text on their own printing press, which allowed for a freedom that van Schurman had not enjoyed as a young woman. Her prominence and power within the Labadist community made such liberties possible, and so, even as a woman, she had more control over the expression of her own thoughts and self-fashioning than she had ever experienced during her youth.

While the patriarchy of Dutch society disparaged her for in its view, “acting like a woman,” she embraced her new self-fashioning and whole-heartedly promoted traditional female attributes such as inner spiritual experience and emotion. Clearly, for van Schurman, Labadism was the perfect spiritual complement to her life-long pursuit of freedom in the acquisition of enlightenment. In her earlier life she had been constrained to think and produce in traditional and rational male discourse and artistic practice. In many ways, she had to abandon her own gender in order to train and participate in the public, male arenas of art and philosophy. Conversion to Labadism, however, allowed her finally and fully to embrace her intrinsic female spiritual self, which had been inhibited by those who had pressured her to “act sensibly” in a patriarchal world. Indeed, her male contemporaries had considered it madness to reject the socially prized pursuit of reason. This judgment came as a result of the marked differentiation between

their objective recognition of van Schurman's genius and logic and their subjective appraisal of her spiritual "madness." The inner spiritual cause that she spoke of was not rational to their minds, thus they could only condemn this abnormal, foolish, female discourse as hysteria. For this reason, her reputation as a great woman was resurrected only after her death, at which point in time men could celebrate her scholarly abilities because they could ignore the irrationality of her spiritual choice. Nevertheless, for van Schurman, "choosing the better part" as her new self-identity meant the pursuit of a higher truth than reason—a truth that was achieved by inward spiritual understanding informed by God.



Fig. 1: Lady World, Jacques de Gheyn II, 1596



Fig. 2: *Lady World*, Jan Miense Molenaer, 1633



Fig. 3: Self-Portrait, Anna Maria van Schurman, 1633



Fig. 4: Portrait of Hans Bol, Hendrik Goltzius, 1593



Fig. 5: Self-Portrait, Anna Maria van Schurman, 1640



Fig. 6: Portrait of Jacob Cats, Willem Jacobs Delff after Michiel Jans van Mierevelt, 1635



Fig. 7: Self-Portrait, after Anna Maria van Schurman, 1637, from Jacob Cats's 'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Stein van den Selven



Fig. 8: *Portrait of William I*, Willem Jacobs Delff after Adriaen van de Venne, 1623



Fig. 9: *Self-Portrait*, after Anna Maria van Schurman, 1643, from Johan van Beverwijck's *Van de Wtneementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts*



Fig. 10: Portrait of Hugo Grotius, Willem Jacobs Delff after Michiel Jans van Mierevelt, 1632



Fig. 11: *Self-Portrait*, Anna Maria van Schurman, 1630's



Fig. 12: Portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman, Jan Lievens, 1649



Fig. 13: Portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman, Cornelis van Dalen de Jonge after Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen, ca. 1660

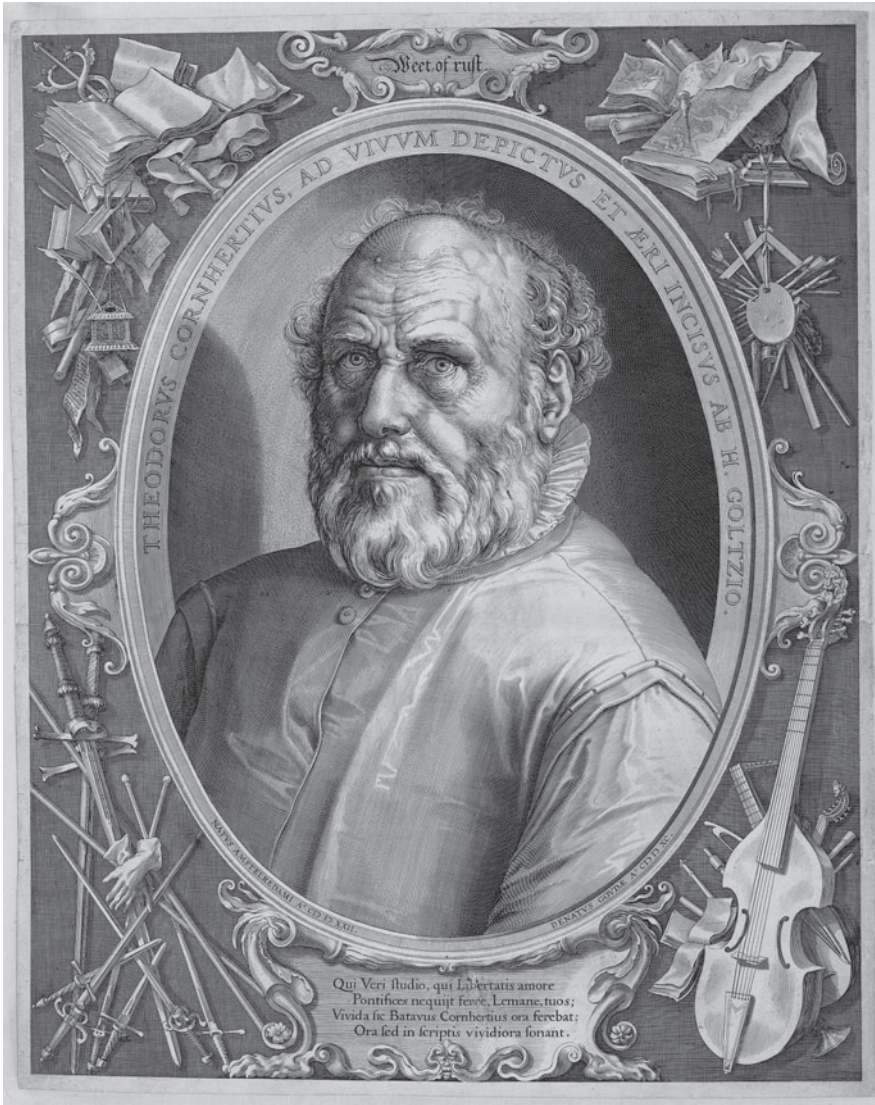


Fig. 14: Portrait of Dirck Volkerts Coornhert, Hendrick Goltzius, ca. 1592



Fig. 15: Self-Portrait, Jan van Munnikhuysen after Anna Maria van Schurman, 1684

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Melancholy, Madness, and Demonic Possession in the Early Modern West

In 1651 Prince Christian August of Sulzbach (1622–1708) suffered a spiritual crisis that led to a nervous breakdown. The best account of this crisis is found in the reports sent between May and August of that year to Christian August's Catholic uncle Duke Wolfgang Wilhelm of Neuburg by his agent and tax collector Johann Kaspar Gundermann. The first sign of a crisis appeared when Christian August began to act strangely toward the Catholics in his territories. At the beginning of May, he revoked their right to worship, and he fired all the Catholics in his service on the grounds that they could not be trusted. He forbade the Franciscans living in Amberg to enter Sulzbach, and he even threatened to have Gundermann arrested. By the end of May, Gundermann reported to Philipp Wilhelm that Christian August was "gantz verruckht" (completely crazy).

Gundermann was not the only one to reach this conclusion. Ministers and leading citizens wrote to Christian August's brother, urging him to come quickly and take the place of his incapacitated sibling.¹ Their worry and concern was increased by a disturbing incident in the palace gardens. Walking with his wife, who was described as weeping uncontrollably day and night, Christian August called a blind man to him. Taking his cue from the Gospel of John, he smeared the blind man's eyes with spittle mixed with earth, washed his face, and then read several passages from the Bible in a loud voice while laying his hands on the man.² This caused much head-shaking in Sulzbach, which was further exacerbated by reports that Christian August was unable to sleep, that he studied day and night and sat for hours in front of the palace stables reading the Bible and other religious works to his horses.³

When it comes to explaining Christian August's strange behavior, it is impossible to ignore the connection between mental health, spirituality, and religion that affected every aspect of early modern political, social, cultural, and economic life. Christian August had inherited a delicate religious situation when he

1 Volker Wappmann, *Durchbruch zur Toleranz: Die Religionspolitik des Pfalzgrafen Christian August von Sulzbach, 1622–1708*. Einzelarbeiten aus der Kirchengeschichte Bayerns, 69 (Neustadt: Verlag Dengener & Co., 1995), 65.

2 John 9: 6–7. Christian August was reading Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* during this period, which may help to explain his behavior.

3 Wappmann, *Durchbruch* (see note 1), 66.

succeeded to the Dukedom of Sulzbach. His father, August of Neuburg, was a younger son of Philip Ludwig (ca.1568–1614) of Neuburg and since the law of primogeniture held for the Neuburg lands, August's oldest brother Wolfgang Wilhelm (1578–1653) was first in the line of inheritance. In 1613 Wolfgang Wilhelm converted to Catholicism, much to the dismay of August and his brother Johann Friedrich, who remained Lutherans. After their father's death, Catholicism became the official religion in the territory of Neuburg, while Lutheranism remained the official religion in the lesser territories inherited by his younger brothers. The religious schism in the family became a constant source of tension because Wolfgang Wilhelm claimed to have the ultimate authority and did everything he could to promote Catholicism in his brothers' territories.⁴ The Thirty Years' War further aggravated the situation. By 1627 Neuburg forces controlled Sulzbach. Wolfgang Wilhelm introduced the Counter-Reformation,⁵ and his sovereignty over Sulzbach was officially recognized by the Emperor on May 8, 1627. By October, 1627 Lutherans had been dismissed from 57 Churches and eight Protestant professors had lost their places at the gymnasium in Sulzbach.

This was the situation the young Christian August inherited at the age of nine when his father August died in 1631. Dominated by his uncle, he was bound to accept the prevailing Catholic policy. In 1649, however, at the age of 27, Christian August was restored to his lands by the Peace of Westphalia.⁶ In control of his territory for the first time, he reversed his uncle's Catholic policy, restoring Lutheran pastors to their previous positions and employing Protestants as government officials and counselors.⁷ This reversion did not settle the religious problem, however, especially for the newly disenfranchised Catholics. The solution that Christian August eventually came to was bitterly resented by the Lutherans in Sulzbach because it led to the policy set out in the "Simultaneum," an accord reached between Christian August and his Catholic cousin Philipp Wilhelm in 1652, the year before Philipp Wilhelm became Count Palatine of Neuburg at the

4 For a succinct discussion of this complex historical situation, see Wappmann, *Durchbruch* (see note 1), 15.

5 There is a debate among historians about the use of the term "Counter-Reformation." Some scholars, particularly Catholic ones, object to this term and suggest "Catholic Renewal" is more appropriate on the grounds that the Catholic Church was not simply responding to the Protestant Reformation but initiating reforms on its own. If just for the sake of clarity, I have used "Counter-Reformation" because most people recognize the term.

6 [Johann Stephan Tretzel], *Aktenmässige Geschichte des Cölnischen Vergleiches und des darauf eingeführten Simultaneums im Herzogthume Sulzbach: Ein wichtiger Beytrag zur Oberpfälzischen Staats- und Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1797), 2.

7 *Aktenmässige Geschichte* (see note 6), 5.

death of his father. The cousins agreed that all Church property and both Church and governmental positions in the territory of Sulzbach would be shared equally between Catholics and Lutherans.

This was a bitter blow to the Lutherans, who saw it as an immoral capitulation to the hated Papacy. Initially the agreement was advantageous for Catholics, but after Christian August's own conversion to Catholicism in 1655, they too turned against the "Simultaneum" and did everything in their power to have it repealed and Lutheranism suppressed. Christian August's tolerance far exceeded that of his subjects. For all the success his policy had in keeping the peace between Protestants and Catholics, neither group had anything positive to say about the concept of toleration. The idea that there could be more than one truth made no sense to people who believed salvation depended upon their staunch adherence to a particular creed.⁸

Christian August eventually resolved his spiritual crisis and went on to lead a long and productive life, but for a short period of time he joined the ranks of those other "mad princes" described so well by H. C. Erik Midelfort.⁹ Midelfort claims that "the second half of the sixteenth century was increasingly an "age of melancholy'," and that this melancholy often led to madness.¹⁰ Melancholy and madness were staples of Elizabethan and Stuart drama, which is filled with "psychopathic monstrosities."¹¹ Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth are all characters suffering from extreme melancholy. For Hamlet the world has become "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable (I, ii, 133). His apathy, disillusion, and cynicism inspires a deep disgust with himself, making life loathsome and tedious: "O! That this too, too solid flesh would melt . . ." (I, ii, 129).¹² But Hamlet's is no

⁸ Wappmann, *Durchbruch* (see note 1), 77.

⁹ H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994). See Peter Mario Kreuter, "Wahn und Wahnsinn im 16. Jahrhundert: Nebst einen Blick auf die Behandlung psychischer Störungen bei Paracelsus," *Religion und Gesundheit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 323–46.

¹⁰ H. C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 20.

¹¹ Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580–1642* (East Lansing MI: Michigan State University, 1951), 92; Edgar Allison Peers, *Elizabethan Drama and Its Mad Folk* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., 1914).

¹² Sonja Hansard-Weiner, "On Hamlet's Melancholy," *Madness, Melancholy, and the Limits of the Self*, ed. Andrew D. Weiner and Leonard V. Kaplan, Graven Images: Studies in Culture, Law, and the Sacred, 3 (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Law School, 1996, 58–64; Andrew D. Weiner, "Madness and the Limits of the Self in Shakespeare's King Lear," *Madness, Melancholy, and the Limits of the Self*, 265–82.

ordinary melancholy; he differs from Christian August because he thinks, as an increasing number of people did, that the devil might be involved. This comes out clearly in the ghost scene when Hamlet tries to discern whether the specter before him is an “honest ghost” or “the devil,” who “Out of my weakness and my melancholy—/ As he is very potent with such spirits—Abuses me to damn me” (II, ii, 636–40).¹³ Hamlet’s tortured psyche illustrates the way melancholy and madness were increasingly seen, not simply as a physical illness or spiritual malaise, but as signs of demonic possession. This shift in the etiology of melancholy reflected the gradual demonization of the world that was such a feature of the Reformation and Counter Reformation period.

Several decades ago William Monter described the seventeenth century as “the golden age of demoniacs,”¹⁴ and subsequent scholarship has confirmed this assessment. Midelfort claims, for example, that the “the evidence actually points to an epidemic rise in the second half of the sixteenth century of demonic possession,” an epidemic that extended well into the following century.¹⁵ Material life was harsh in the early modern world. Hunger, disease, and death were ever present as a result of the continual warfare provoked by the bitter religious controversies of the Reformation era. Famines resulting from bad weather, poor harvests, and poor transportation were a recurring fact of life, as were episodes of plague and other epidemic diseases. Spiritual life was equally harsh, as Catholics and Protestants fought for hegemony and felt perfectly justified in killing those who disagreed with them.¹⁶ In this cruel environment the devil was, as Midelfort, says “as much a reality as death,” and people increasingly came to believe that the devil was the cause of melancholy, mental illness, despair, and possession.¹⁷ It was only in the eighteenth century that madness began to be separated from religion. The theology of madness then gave way to the medicalization of madness and finally to the psychology of madness.¹⁸ By the end of the eighteenth century most educated people accepted the idea that madness was natural rather

¹³ Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady* (see note 11), 108–09.

¹⁴ E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands During the Reformation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 60.

¹⁵ Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 19.

¹⁶ Charles Webster, *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Leslie Clarkson, *Death, Disease, and Famine in Pre-Industrial England* (London and New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975).

¹⁷ Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 80.

¹⁸ Roy Porter, *Madmen: A Social History of Madhouses, Mad Doctors and Lunatics* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2004), 89, 179–80 (first published as *Mind Forg’d Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* [London: Athlone Press Ltd., 1987]).

than supernatural, a physical or psychological affliction with good as well as harmful effects.

The purpose of this essay is to explain these transformations in the way people viewed melancholy and madness. What convinced so many early modern individuals that not only was there a terrifying increase in the number of mad men and women, but that the disturbed thoughts and actions of these mad persons were the direct consequence of the devil's growing dominion and his ability to literally possess the demented? And what persuaded many of their immediate descendants to reject this idea and consider madness a clinical state that could be treated and even cured? And finally, can we really see the eighteenth century as the period of "The Great Confinement," as Michel Foucault and others have argued? These are the major issues that will be discussed, but it is also important to understand how ideas about madness, melancholy, and demonic possession reflected the profound changes in religious, economic, social, and political relationships that occurred in the early modern period, especially as these changes affected attitudes about human nature and fostered a growing sense of individualism.

Mental Illness in the Early Modern Context: From Melancholy to Demonic Possession

Given the contextual nature of mental illness, scholars who have written about melancholy and madness in the early modern period are adamant in rejecting what they consider to be the misguided effort to explain either in modern terms.¹⁹ Following George Devereux, Midelfort argues that the melancholy and madness of any period is a constructed fact. To understand madness in its many early modern manifestations (hysteria, melancholy, possession) requires understanding the contexts in which madness and mental disorders are diagnosed and treated. We can only experience and understand what we recognize, and this requires immersion in the historical situation in which mad men and women lived, suffered, were diagnosed, and treated.²⁰ In the words of Devereux, "the psychologically ill comply rigorously with expectation regarding behavior suit-

¹⁹ In *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (1972; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), Erik H. Erikson applied modern psychoanalytic theories to Luther in a way that most early modern historians today would reject.

²⁰ Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 1–7.

able for madmen.”²¹ Different cultures produce their own mental illnesses. The role that schizophrenia plays in the modern West was taken by melancholy in the early modern period, especially the melancholy that led to demonic possession.²² Arthur Kleinman has shown that as of 1994 ninety percent or more of the mental disorders found across the world did not appear in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.²³ This suggests that modern, Western concepts of mental disease are just that, modern and Western, and they cannot be applied to mental illness in the early modern period.

Another point upon which scholars of madness agree is the protean nature of the condition in the early modern period. Madness could be a catastrophic illness or a term of insult or endearment; it could signify rage or be the mark of irrationality as well as good or bad passions, especially love; and it could be applied to fools, rogues, devils, and artists alike, although for different reasons. Medieval theories of melancholy and madness joined forces with ancient theories brought to the fore by Renaissance Humanists, and this amalgam was supplemented by new medical explanations developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁴ While we would expect newer theories to supplant older ones, this was not the case.

Widely divergent and incompatible theories appear side by side: melancholy and madness were caused by too much creativity, grief, or idleness; they arose from an imbalance or corruption of the four humors; they reflected astronomical influences, especially that of Saturn; or they were the work of the devil and his demonic minions, an idea that gained enormous traction in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Jennifer Radden, “different meanings . . . seem to accumulate and coexist, creating ambiguity and resonance as centuries go by. Melancholy is both a normal disposition and a sign of mental disturbance; it is both a feeling and a way of behaving. It is a nebulous mood but also a set of

21 Georges Devereux, “Schizophrenia: An Ethnic Psychosis, or Schizophrenia without Tears,” *Basic Problems in Ethnopsychiatry*, trans. Basia Miller Gulati and Georges Devereux (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), 217.

22 Louis Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); id., “Civilized Madness, Schizophrenia, Self Consciousness and the Modern Mind,” *History of the Human Sciences* 7 (1994): 83–120.

23 Arthur Kleinman, “Anthropology and Psychiatry: The Role of Culture in Cross-Cultural Research on Illness,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 151 (1987): 447–54.

24 Midelfort describes the attempt of physicians in Germany and all over Europe to develop “a rigorously somatic interpretation of disease, an interpretation that ignored all popular or learned attempts to link disease with sin or immorality, with demons, or with God himself.” But this, of course, did not include all physicians. *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 157.

self-accusing beliefs.”²⁵ In his *Anatomy of Melancholy* Robert Burton describes just how chaotic the notion of melancholy was at the time he wrote: “The Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues as this chaos of Melancholy doth variety of symptoms.”²⁶ But for all the different ways melancholy and madness were defined, there was a growing consensus that melancholy and madness were caused by demonic possession. To make sense of this growing consensus, one must pay close attention to contemporary debates about religion and religious doctrine.²⁷

Early modern madness was believed to be visible. It was not a poison within that could lie dormant and unremarked for long periods as in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Madness presented a world of signs that could be read through the diagnosis of experts observing the behavior and actions of the mad. Cajus Gabriel Cibber’s sculptures of “Melancholy” and “Mania” over the entrance to Bethlehem Hospital in London (commonly known as Bedlam) were iconic depictions of what contemporaries envisioned when they thought of lunatics, just as Albrecht Dürer’s famous engraving of “Melancholia” encapsulated the artistic notion of the melancholy genius stemming from the Renaissance philosopher Marsilius Ficino (1433–1499).²⁸ Madness was therefore tangible. It might have a constitu-

25 Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ix.

26 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (1932; New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), pt.1, sec. 3, mem.1, subs. 3, 97.

27 Middlefort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 26.

28 Ficino revived the pseudo-Aristotelian notions of melancholy and combined these with platonic ideas about the inspired madness or frenzy (furor) of seers and poets. In their essay in this volume, “Melancholy as the Condition of Knowledge in Jakob Böhme’s *Aurora*,” Florian Westhagen and Tünde Karnitscher emphasize the role of melancholy in Böhme’s epistemology, an idea that builds on Ficino’s notion of the melancholy genius and scholar. See Margot and Rudolph Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn* (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2007 [1963]); Raymond Klibansky, Edwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1964); Jane Campbell Hutchison, “Albrecht Dürer’s “Melancholia I: An Omnium Gatherum,” *Graven Images* (see note 12), 27–40. In his monograph *Melencolia I: im Labyrinth der Deutung*. Fischer-Taschenbücher, 3958. Kunststück (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), Hartmut Böhme challenges the idea that Dürer was indebted to Ficino. Böhme’s rejection of academic and institutionalized knowledge, together with his emphasis on the necessity of revelation if true knowledge is to be gained, was shared by Paracelsus (1493–1541), Jan Baptista van Helmont (1580–1644), and their followers, who, like Böhme, stressed the role of sensual experience in the accumulation of knowledge. See Allison P. Coudert, *Religion, Magic, and Science in Early Modern Europe and America* (Santa Barbara, CA: Prager, 2011), ch. 9. Böhme’s conviction that knowledge in the form of illumination can only come out of suffering and melancholy is similar to the “dark night of the soul” experi-

tional component, and it could produce organic symptoms, but the way it manifested itself was cultural. Because of this it could be both learned and performed as in the case of the possessed nuns in Loudun and Louviers and the girls at Salem discussed below.

Scholars have written about the “malaise” that affected Europeans during the late Middle Ages, a malaise that had strong roots in the fear that the Catholic Church no longer provided a clear path to salvation.²⁹ This fear prompted Luther to write his ninety-five theses and embark on the journey that led to the Reformation. Luther inherited the medieval connection between sin and madness, but he ratcheted up this notion to unprecedented levels, believing the apocalypse was imminent and the power and fury of the devil stronger than ever before because the devil finally realized he had no chance of salvation³⁰:

In these most recent and final hours of history he [the devil] has been provoked into such a rage against the knowledge of Christ in its revived form that men who previously seemed to be possessed by demons and to be insane now seem to have become demons themselves, possessed by even more horrible demons and by an insanity that goes even beyond the demonic.³¹

Originally fired up by the belief that men were reasonable and scripture clear, Luther thought he could persuade everyone, including the Catholic hierarchy, to accept his theology. When his message was rebuffed, he concluded that “. . . the whole wicked world . . . is possessed by the devil and is being led headlong into every crime.”³² Like Luther, Calvin believed that the world was infested with demonic spirits, who constantly made war on humans:

Now because God bends the unclean spirits hither and thither at will, he so governs their activity that they exercise believers in combat, ambush them, invade their peace, beset

enced by the sixteenth-century Roman Catholic mystic St. John of the Cross, whose treatise and poem described the painful experience people endure as they seek to grow in spiritual maturity and unite with God. The idea that true knowledge comes through suffering, even death and the illumination that follows, was a common theme in alchemy and alchemical symbolism, subjects Böhme, like Paracelsus and van Helmont, knew well.

29 Carter Linberg, *The European Reformations* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), ch. 2.

30 Penelope B. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Convention of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); Judith Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness* (New York: Anchor Books, 1975).

31 Martin Luther, *Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 101 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1883–[cited as WA]), 40/1, 35; *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Jaroslav J. Pelikan, 55 vols. (St. Louis, MO: The Fortress Press, 1955–1986 [cited as LW]) 27:147

32 Luther, WA 40/1: 479; LW 26:309 (see note 30).

them in combat, and also often weary them, rout them, terrify them, and sometimes wound them; yet they never vanquish or crush them. But the wicked they subdue and drag away; they exercise power over their minds and bodies, and misuse them as if they were slaves for every shameful act.³³

Robert Burton agreed, seeing devils everywhere: “The air is not so full of flies in summer, as it is all times of invisible devils.”³⁴

The devil assumed a central position in Protestant thought that he never quite achieved among Catholics. For while Luther, Calvin, and other Protestant reformers emphasized the fact that life was one long struggle against the demonic “other,” they removed the support of priests, saints, and especially the Virgin Mary enjoyed by Catholics. The ascendancy of the devil among Protestants was reflected in the huge popularity of a new genre of popular literature, the devil book. By conservative estimate there were approximately 100,000 individual copies of devil books on the German market during the 1560s, an enormous number if one considers the low level of literacy at the time. In their most common form devil books singled out a particular vice—smoking, drinking, dancing, gambling, or swearing—and showed how devilish it was. Devil books also attacked specific religious and political groups at a time when religion and politics were thoroughly entwined. The sale of devil books was forbidden in Catholic countries, and although they were smuggled in and read by Catholics, devil books were a characteristically Protestant form of literature.³⁵

Both Luther and Calvin took a very dim view of human nature, claiming that human beings were so incorrigibly sinful that they could do nothing to achieve their own salvation and had to rely entirely on God’s mercy. Although created by God, Luther believed that human nature has been totally corrupted by sin. Humans not only lacked the will power to do what is right, but the human senses and reason were so thoroughly corrupted by original sin that judgments as to right and wrong are wholly unreliable. According to Luther even the saved were polluted by sin:

33 Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY, and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), I.14.18, 176.

34 Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (see note 25), pt. 1, sec. 2, mem. 1, subs. 2, 188.

35 Max Osborn, *Die Teuffelliteratur des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (1893; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965); Keith L. Roos, *The Devil in Sixteenth-Century German Literature: The Teufelsbücher*. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe I: Deutsche Literatur und Germanistik, 68 (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1972). Roos gives the much higher estimate of 240,000 devil books, but this includes the tracts that were bound together in the three editions of Sigmund Feyereabend’s *Theatrum Diabolorum* (1569, 1575, 1587–1588).

... we have no right to indulge in much bragging and boasting when we step before God. Even if we were members of the highest aristocracy on earth and were prone to take pride in this, before God we would still be nothing but bags of worms or bags of manure, infested with lice, maggots, stinking and foul. Therefore St. Paul says (Rom. 3:23): "All have sinned," the whole world is guilty before God. And Isaiah (64:6) declares: "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment." The fact that our dear God overlooks our shortcomings and shows us mercy; that He has given us life to date, although He would have a full right to cast us into hell's abyss at any time; that He tolerates us poor bags of maggots in the world and in this vale of tears, which is a true hospital and infirmary for us who are all syphilitic and leprous before God—all this we owe to His mercy and compassion and not to our good works.³⁶

Calvin held the same dismal view of humankind: "For everyone is distressed by his own wickedness; he is terrified by his own evil thoughts and by conscience."³⁷ He did not exclude himself from this categorical judgment: "Whenever I descended into myself, or raised my mind to thee, extreme terror seized me—terror which no expiations nor satisfactions could cure And the more closely I examined myself, the sharper the stings with which my conscience was pricked, so that the only solace which remained to me was to delude myself by obliviousness."³⁸ Given such a statement, Calvin was understandably beset by anxiety and fear, especially the fear of divine judgment:

If the judgments of God are so dreadful on this earth, how dreadful will he be when he shall come at last to judge the world! All the instances of punishment that now inspire fear or terror are nothing more than preludes for that final vengeance which he will thunder against the reprobate. Many things which he seems to overlook he purposely reserves and delays till that last day. And if the ungodly are not able to bear these chastisements, how much less will they be capable of enduring his glorious and inconceivable majesty when he shall ascend to that awful tribunal before which the angles themselves tremble.³⁹

The fear, anxiety, alienation, and self-loathing experienced by Luther and Calvin both reflected and fostered the epidemic of melancholy besetting early modern

³⁶ Luther on John I:16, LW, 22:132–34 (see note 30).

³⁷ *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, edited by G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss, 59 vols. Corpus Reformatorum 29–87 (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863–1900 [cited as CO]), Comm. Is. 57:20. Cited in William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 41.

³⁸ Calvin, *Responsio ad Sadoleti epistolam*, CO V: 412. Cited in Bouwsma, *Calvin* (see note 34), 41.

³⁹ Calvin, Comm. Is. 10:3. Cited in Bouwsma, *Calvin* (see note 34), 42. Bouwsma is very good at explaining the origins and consequences of Calvin's terrible anxiety and putting it in the context of early modern European culture.

people across the religious spectrum, although it appeared especially strong among Protestants. In one of his sermons John Donne remarked on the prevalence of melancholy among his fellow citizens, connecting it to the apocalypse, which he, like so many others, expected imminently:

[God] hath reserved us to such times, as being the late times, give us even the dregs and lees of misery to drinke . . . God hath accompanied, and complicated almost all our bodily diseases of these times, with an extraordinary sadnesse, a predominant melancholy, a faintnesse of heart, a cheerlessness, a joylessness of spirit.⁴⁰

Burton was also struck by the melancholy fear characteristic of so many of his contemporaries. They fear, he says,

God's heavy wrath, a most intolerable pain and grief of heart seizeth on them; to their thinking they are already damned; they suffer the pains of Hell . . . They smell brimstone, talk familiarly with Devils, hear and see chimeras, prodigies, uncouth shapes . . . They roar and howl, curse, blaspheme, deny God. . . and are still ready to offer violence unto themselves.⁴¹

Richard Baxter recognized the same fearfulness motivating the thought and actions of contemporary melancholics, and this includes himself:

Melancholy Persons are commonly exceeding fearful . . . Their Fantasie most erreth in aggravating their Sin, or Dangers or Unhappiness . . . They are still addicted to Excess of Sadness, some weeping they know not why, and some thinking it ought to be so; and if they should smile or speak merrily, their Hearts smite them for it, as if they had done amiss. They are continual Self-Accusers . . . They never, never read or hear of any miserable Instance, but they are thinking that this is their Case. And yet they think that never was any one as they are. They are utterly unable to rejoice in anything. They cannot apprehend, believe or think of any thing that is comfortable to them . . . They are still displeased and discontented with themselves . . . They are endless in their scruples . . . Hence it comes to pass that they are greatly addicted to superstition. They have lost the power of governing their Thoughts by Reason; so that if you convince them that they should cast out their self-perplexing, unprofitable Thoughts, and turn their Thoughts to other Subjects, or to be vacant, they are not able to obey you.⁴²

⁴⁰ John Donne, *LXXX Sermons* (London: Printed for Flesher for M. F. J. Marriot & R. Royston, 1649), no. 66, 671–72.

⁴¹ Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (see note 25), Pt. 3, sec. 4, mem. 2, subs. 4, 406.

⁴² Richard Baxter, *The Signs and Causes of Melancholy. With directions suited to the case of those who are afflicted with it*. Collected out of the works of Mr. Richard Baxter, for the sake of those, who are wounded in spirit. By Samuel Clifford, minister of the Gospel (London: Cruttenden & Cox, 1716), 1.

Europeans considered this kind of melancholy particularly characteristic of the English, as did the English themselves, but, as we have seen, melancholy easily crossed national boundaries during the early modern period, affecting prince and pauper and everything in between. Pascal, for example, took it as a given that man's condition is one of "inconstancy, boredom, anxiety."⁴³ "We search for happiness and find only wretchedness and death."⁴⁴ He rejects those who praise and those who blame man equally: "I can only approve of those who search in anguish."⁴⁵ Because of their incorrigible sinfulness and inability to do anything to achieve salvation "Men are so necessarily mad that it would be another twist of madness not to be mad."⁴⁶ The anxiety, anguish, and madness of the human condition is the overarching theme of Pascal's *Pensées*, and he spoke of his own fear in the face of the infinity of the universe:

When I consider the short span of my life absorbed into the preceding and subsequent eternity, *memoria hospitii unius dies praetereuntis* [like the memory of a one-day guest], the small space which I fill and even can see, swallowed up in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing and which knows nothing of me, I am terrified, and surprised to find myself here rather than there, for there is no reason why it should be here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who put me here? On whose orders and on whose decision have this place and this time been allotted to me?⁴⁷

Writing before Pascal, Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) evinces the same melancholy when faced with both the evil in the world and the insignificance of humans in contrast to the cosmos and God. The recognition that "godless" and "barbaric" people "possessed the best lands" and enjoyed "better luck than the pious" caused Böhme "to grow gravely melancholy and deeply troubled." His melancholic state was augmented by the realization of his own nothingness and worthlessness: "I at last fell into severe melancholy and sadness at the sight of the great depths of the world with its sun and stars . . . Moreover, I regarded the tiny little

⁴³ Blaise Pascal's *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi, ed. Anthony Levi. Oxford World Classics (1995; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 52.

⁴⁴ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 42), 20.

⁴⁵ Pascal, *Pensées*, (see note 42), 24.

⁴⁶ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 42), 31.

⁴⁷ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 42), 102. In *Calvin*, Bouwsma discusses at length Calvin's terrible fear of the "Abyss," which he associated with the boundless, the infinite, the unformed, and the unintelligible (45).

spark that is the human being and considered what it amounted to before God, set against his great work, which is the heavens and earth.”⁴⁸

Religious melancholy continued to afflict people, especially the more pious, well into the eighteenth century. John Wesley recounts the story of a brother and sister tormented by guilt to the point of insanity, from which the brother recovered but the sister did not. He visited the sister and describes her tortured state of mind:

Sat. 20 I saw a melancholy sight. A Gentlewoman of an unspotted character, sitting at home, on May 4th, 1771, cried out, that “something seized her by the side.” Then she said it was in her mouth. Quickly after she complained of her head. From that time she wept continually for four months, and afterwards grew outrageous: but always insisted, That God had forsaken her, and that the Devil possessed her body and soul. I found it availed nothing to reason with her: she only blasphemed the more, cursing God, and vehemently desiring yet fearing to die.⁴⁹

Her brother had gone through a similar experience. All of a sudden he “felt the wrath of God upon him and was in the deepest horror and agony of soul. He had no rest day or night, feeling he was under the full power of the Devil.” This lasted for eighteen months, after which “in a moment the pressure was removed: he believed God had not forsaken him. His understanding was clear as ever. He resumed his employ, and followed it in the fear of God.”⁵⁰ This extreme kind of religious melancholy was a serious matter. Not only did it lead to insanity, but it caused individuals to take their own lives or to commit what Kathy Stuart calls “suicide by proxy.”⁵¹ Midelfort claims that sixteenth-century Lutheran culture “positively expected that some anguished souls would fall into despair and perhaps try to commit suicide,” an act clearly inspired by the devil.⁵² The anguish

⁴⁸ This aspect of Böhme’s epistemology is discussed by Westhagen and Karnitscher in their essay in this volume. The quotations come from Böhme’s *Aurora* cited in their essay.

⁴⁹ Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 78–79.

⁵⁰ Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 79.

⁵¹ Given the traditional religious view that suicide was an unpardonable crime leading to eternal damnation, some individuals chose to murder others in order to have the state put them to death. As murderers, but not suicides, they could repent, and salvation was therefore possible. See Kathy Stuart, “Melancholy Murderers: Suicide by Proxy and the Insanity Defense,” *Ideas and Cultural Margins: Essays in Honor of H.C. Erik Midelfort*, ed. Robin Barnes and Marjorie Plummer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 63–77; eadem, “Suicide by Proxy: The Unintended Consequences of Public Executions in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” *Central European History* 41 (2008): 413–45.

⁵² Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 12. Theologians considered spiritual distress and anguish an essential part of the salvation process. See H. C. Erik Midelfort, “Religious Mel-

experienced by many Protestants has led scholars, starting with Durkheim, to argue that possession and suicide rates among Protestants were higher than among Catholics.⁵³

Theologians tended to see possession as a punishment for the sins of the victims. In this way the Devil worked as God's executioner. But as Moshe Sluhovsky points out, things were not so simple. Many pious Christians, especially young girls and women, found themselves in the Devil's thrall.⁵⁴ But whoever the possessed might be, learned and popular culture across Europe agreed that incidents of possession were on the rise. Many books, such as *Ursachen warumb der Teufel jetzig so hefftig tobet und wütet* (Reasons why the Devil kills and rages so furiously at the present time), were written to explain this.⁵⁵ Descriptions of demonic attacks were also a staple feature of the wonder and prodigy literature of the period.⁵⁶ Sluhovsky goes as far as to say that demonic possession was "trivial" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because it was so frequently diagnosed: "possession was an idiom that was a part of the cultural vocabulary of early modern people."⁵⁷ It was an idiom that fit in with the Christian belief system, providing an explanation, meaning, and remedy for those afflicted:

For early modern people, living within the Christian belief system, diabolic possession was first and foremost a routine explanatory mode that gave meaning to an affliction or an event and offered a practical solution. It was an interpreta-

ancholy and Suicide: On the Reformation Origins of a Sociological Stereotype," *Graven Images* 3 (see note 27), 41–56.

53 According to Durkheim's "first law," modernization—increased literacy, urbanization, the weakening of family ties and occupational identities, together with Protestantism—led to increased "individuation" and social isolation, which in turn, contributed to an increase in suicides (1897; Emile Durkheim, *On Suicide* [London: Penguin Classic, 2007]). In "Suicide by Proxy" (see note 50), Kathy Stuart provides an overview of current scholarship on what she describes as the "vexed—and perhaps ultimately unanswerable—question of the impact of religious confession on suicide rates. . . ."

54 Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 72.

55 Midlefort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 58.

56 Heinz Schilling, "Job Finsel und die Zeichen der Endzeit," *Volkserzählung und Reformation: ein Handbuch zur Tradierung und Funktion von Erzählstoffen und Erzählliteratur im Protestantismus*, ed. Wolfgang Brückner (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974), 325–92; Philip M. Soergel, *Miracles and the Protestant Imagination: The Evangelical Wonder Book*. Oxford Series in Historical Theology (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). See Albrecht Classen, "The Devil in the Early Modern World and in Sixteenth-Century German Devil Literature," *The Faustian Century: German Literature in the Age of Luther and Faustus*, ed. J. M. van der Laan and Andrew Weeks (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House/Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 257–83.

57 Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* (see note 53), 14–15.

tion that elucidated the meaning of suffering at the same time that it alleviated it.”⁵⁸

Midelfort claims the same efficacy for a diagnosis of demonic possession in early modern Germany: “The pious, learned, and literate found that it made better sense of their world to describe the apparent chaos of life and the prevalence of wickedness as a dramatic personal struggle between good and evil, of angels and demons.”⁵⁹ This propensity comes out in seventeenth century autobiographies, where salvation is seen as a literal psychomachy between God and the devil.⁶⁰ John Napier (1550–1617), a Scottish landowner, mathematician, astronomer, and physician, who was also believed to practice magic and alchemy, records that some 600 of his patients believed they were bewitched or possessed.⁶¹

In his discussion of Robert Burton and his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Roy Porter refers to what he sees as the “spirit-drenched cosmos of early modern Europe.”⁶² Burton’s universe was definitely “spirit-drenched,” especially when it came to demons and devils. His book was immensely popular among his contemporaries because it so successfully mirrored their beliefs, interests, and opinions. Five editions were printed during his lifetime, quite an accomplishment for a book that only grew longer with each new printing, going from approximately 300,000 words to 480,000.⁶³ On the title page Burton styled himself “Democritus Junior,” assuming Democritus’s role as a satirical critic of human absurdities. Burton was fascinated by the supernatural, the exotic, the remote, and the bizarre. As one of his biographers says, “He is an industrious collector of incredibilities.”⁶⁴ He described palm trees in love (3.2.1.1, 43), showers of “stones, frogs, mice, etc., rats” (1.1.3, 48), and a ship dug out of the Swiss mountains, containing 48 corpses (2.2.3, 40). He recounts how Jerome Cardan’s father “conjured up 7 Devils in Greek apparel” (1.2.1.2, 184) and how Cardan himself had “an ariel Devil bound to him for twenty and eight years,” while Cornelius Agrippa’s dog had a Devil tied to its collar and Paracelsus was reputed to have a Devil in the pommel of his sword (1.2.1.2, 192). He describes men who have had strange hallucinations: one believing he was made of glass, another that he had frogs in his belly, and still others

⁵⁸ Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* (see note 53), 28.

⁵⁹ Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 53.

⁶⁰ Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 70.

⁶¹ Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 75.

⁶² Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 72.

⁶³ Lawrence Babb, *Sanity in Bedlam: A Study of Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1959), 15.

⁶⁴ Babb, *Sanity in Bedlam* (see note 62), 41.

who envisioned themselves as emperors, wolves, bears, or dogs.⁶⁵ Early in the second volume Burton asks a series of questions: Is Teneriffe really 72 miles high? Is there really a kingdom in South Asia called El Dorado? Do Muscovites hibernate in winter, lying “fast asleep . . . benumbed with cold” until April.⁶⁶

Burton’s fascination with “incredibilities” further helps to explain his popularity, for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries marked the period of the Scientific Revolution, when theologians and natural philosophers, not to mention many ordinary citizens, were at great pains to separate fact from fiction and root out deception, fakery, and illusion.⁶⁷ The investigation of such phenomena as witchcraft and possession and attempts to substantiate the existence of elves and fairies, not to mention angels and demons, went hand in hand with experiments to determine the efficacy of magical spells, the reality of miracles, and the effectiveness of exorcism.⁶⁸ Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* was predicated on the idea that melancholy and madness were commonly caused by the devil. This becomes especially clear in the third and final section of the work, where he sees melancholy as a snare of the devil luring individuals into sin and leading to disease, death, and damnation. But was this true? And how does one recognize possession, witchcraft, or sorcery? These were crucial questions in an age when theologians, demonologists, inquisitors, and natural philosophers struggled with the problem of distinguishing what was real and knowable from what was imaginary and false.⁶⁹ The awful suggestion that seeing was not believing and conversely that beliefs could not be literally seen led to a skeptical crisis that played itself out in inquisitorial courts and torture chambers, the book-lined studies of

⁶⁵ Babb, *Sanity in Bedlam* (see note 62), 41.

⁶⁶ Babb, *Sanity in Bedlam* (see note 62), 6–7.

⁶⁷ Allison P. Coudert, “Laughing at Credulity and Superstition in the Long Eighteenth Century,” *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 803–29.

⁶⁸ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁶⁹ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Stephens contends that witchcraft theorists were neither credulous fools nor prurient misogynists, but tormented skeptics trying to resolve the conflicts in Christian doctrine about the benevolence of God, the existence of spirits and souls, and the efficacy of the sacraments. Neither irrational nor unscientific, witchcraft theorists deployed all the resources available from natural philosophy and theology to vindicate the goodness of God and the truth of the bible. Witchcraft theory, to use Stephens apt phrase, was a kind of “theological damage control.” It was in itself a theodicy that let God off the hook of seeming injustice (30).

theologians, the laboratories of natural philosophers, and the elaborately staged performances of exorcism that became such a staple of seventeenth century life.⁷⁰

How did one recognize possession and distinguish it from other afflictions? What kind of proof was necessary to establish the reality of witchcraft or sorcery? These were both pressing and disturbing questions for inquisitors and exorcists as well as those condemned. One man convicted of being a Benandanti,⁷¹ turned to his judges and voiced his perplexity: “What grieves my spirit sorely is that I know not whether I be guilty or not. That is why I beseech you to tell me whether one can be a sorcerer unwittingly, for if that be possible, I may be of that miserable sect, tho I know it not.”⁷² Girolamo Menghi (1529–1609), who gained a reputation as an effective exorcist, was one of many people concerned with identifying the indisputable signs of genuine diabolical possession. He lists seven: 1) speaking a foreign language previously unknown; 2) revealing secrets and predicting the future; 3) demonstrating unnatural physical strength; 4) exhibiting hatred toward priests and holy objects; 5) sinking into melancholy and desperation; 6) exploding in rages and uttering blasphemies; and 7) vomiting sharp objects such as knives and glass.⁷³ Innumerable case histories were published to try to prove whether possessions were natural, supernatural, or just fake. In France, for example, the case of Marthe Brossier was debated. The physicians claimed her possession was genuine but natural. Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629), Cardinal and founder of the French congregation of the Oratory, claimed it was supernatural, while Michel Marescot (1539–1605), who published a book on Brossier, was one

70 Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

71 The Benandanti (“Good Walkers”) were members of an agrarian visionary tradition in Friuli (Northern Italy) in 16th and 17th centuries. They claimed to leave their bodies while asleep to fight against witches in order to ensure good crops for the season to come. Between 1575 and 1675, they were tried as heretics by the Roman Inquisition. Carlo Ginzburg was the first scholar to study this group. He concluded that they are part of a much older and wider European tradition of visionary experiences that had its origins in the pre-Christian period. See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. John & Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983 [1966]).

72 Michel Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago and London: The University of London Press, 1996), 117.

73 Menghi’s two most famous books are *Compendio dell’arte essorcistica et possibilità delle mirabili et stupende operationi delli demoni et de’ malefici* (Bologna: G. Rossi, 1576); there were 17 editions between 1576 and 1617) and *Flagellum daemonum, seu exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi, efficacies* . . . (Bologna: G. Rossi, 1577); fourteen editions appeared between 1577 and 1626.

of a number of people who claimed it was a fraud.⁷⁴ The trial of Mary Glover in England was another case that attracted a lot of attention. Edward Jordan, a physician, took the stand and argued that Glover did not suffer from diabolical possession but from hysteria, a subject he had written about.⁷⁵ But because Jordan admitted he didn't know how to treat or cure Glover, the judge, Edmund Anderson, dismissed his testimony on the grounds that if there was no natural remedy, Glover's disease could not be natural: ". . . if you tell me neither a natural cause of it, nor a natural remedy, I will tell you, that it is not natural . . . I care not for your Judgment."⁷⁶ The danger of being fooled by illusions or simply not knowing what to make of supposed evidence was revealed by the great number of books like Marescot's with "truthful," "true," or "truth" in their titles.

When it came to discerning demonic possession the body language of those possessed or under the spell of witchcraft was obsessively charted. Grimaces, contortions, the rolling of eyes, even the slightest physiological changes were observed and noted down with the most assiduous attention. The supposition was that the more people there were to observe a situation the more reliable their observations will be, but only if the right kind of people made these observations.⁷⁷ This can be seen at Loudun. Twenty-six physicians filed reports about the possessed nuns, but not all these reports had the same validity. There was a cleavage between the doctors from the country and the cities; the former were classified as "ignorant," the latter as "clear-sighted." Further cleavages existed between physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries. The physician Guy Patin, for example, railed about the "quackery" of apothecaries.⁷⁸

The emphasis on the character and abilities of those discerning was applied to the possessed as well: "Exorcists and theologians were instructed . . . not to discern spirits, but to discern individuals . . . and to question whether they were

74 Michel Marescot, *Discours veritable sur le fait de Marthe Brossier, de Romorantin, pretend demoniaque* (Paris: Mamert Patisson, 1599).

75 Edward Jordan, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London: Windet, 1603). What is odd is that in his book Jordan did suggest possible remedies, such as foul and fragrant smells, tight lacing, and a sparse diet. Glover was, however, apparently cured by exorcism.

76 Andrew Scull, *Hysteria: The Disturbing History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

77 Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have noted the same supposition lay behind the practice of natural scientists like Robert Boyle to insure that their experiments were "witnessed." See their *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

78 Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 111–12.

worthy of divine favors.”⁷⁹ Michel Certeau describes the attempt made by the throng of exorcists, doctors, and theologians gathered at Loudun to systematize possession by drawing up lists and tables to accompany the meticulous descriptions of the possessed nuns:

The gazes are . . . multiplied and the body of consultants reinforced. The written accounts, in turn, made up of the complementary journeys of so many eyes over the same surface get longer. The narrative becomes cumulative. A lyricism of precision maintains the rhetoric that adds details endlessly following the law of spatial dispersion.”⁸⁰

But the very attempt to produce a surer vision of the facts through more ample observation reveals the underlying worry that certainty is illusive and always out of reach. As Certeau so evocatively says, “A suspicion undermines the eye’s ambitions. There is a worm in the bright apple of vision.”⁸¹

The idea that an individual’s character could be read from his or her behavior and appearance seemed increasingly problematic in an age obsessed with issues of hypocrisy and sincerity. A new concern arose with discerning what was going on within an individual’s soul. Who was actually possessed? Who was a sincere Catholic, a sincere Protestant, or a legitimate mystic? And how could one identify the hypocrites, heretics, and deceivers who craftily hid their heresy and disbelief behind a mask? In the words of Sluhovsky:

Anxieties concerning the reliability of exterior signs as indicators of interiority were not restricted to the religious sphere. This was an age intensely troubled with issues of hypocrisy and sincerity and with the study of physiognomy and the gap between appearance and essences.⁸²

This was, after all, the time of Molière’s *Tartuffe* and *Don Quixote*, an age of art, illusion, and *trompe l’oeil*, when things were often not what they seemed. Metamorphosis was a characteristic theme in baroque art and mirrored the instability in the larger world. In the face of this uncertainty, systematic attempts were made by the Catholic Church in *The Roman Rite* of 1614 to specify the somatic and preternatural signs distinguishing possession from other afflictions. Exorcists were now required to consult with physicians before diagnosing diabolic possession and “not to assume too easily that someone is possessed” (Rule 3).⁸³ The *Rite*

⁷⁹ Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* (see note 53), 204.

⁸⁰ Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 113.

⁸¹ Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 113.

⁸² Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* (see note 53), 31.

⁸³ Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* (see note 53), 31, 203.

kept coming back to the similarities between natural illness and demonic possession, especially in cases of melancholia, while trying to distinguish between the two. The attempt to rule out mistakes, fakeries, and simulations was undertaken by theologians across the religious spectrum as well as by natural philosophers. Joseph Glanvill (1638–1680) and Henry More (1614–1687), both members of England’s Royal Society, tried to establish exactly what witches could and could not do, and Robert Boyle (1627–1691), the “father” of modern chemistry, was equally concerned with sorting out true from false incidents of witchcraft and with establishing the truth or falsity of popular beliefs in elves, fairies, and second-sight.⁸⁴

The same attempt to separate truth from falsehood applied to superstitions. Up to the mid sixteenth century “superstition” was a loose category, but thereafter theologians, inquisitors, witch hunters, and exorcists compiled lists of superstitious practices and even took practitioners to court in an unsuccessful bid to stop them. Thomas Browne’s *Religio Medici* (London, 1643), Laurent Joubert’s *La premiere et second partie des erreurs populaires touchant la medicine et regime de santé* (Bordeaux, 1578), and Scipione Mercurio’s *Degli errori popolari d’Italia* (Rome, 1599) were just a sample of the many books devoted to separating fact from fiction.

Drawing boundaries becomes something of a fixation in the early modern period as a way to defend against the chaotic religious and social situation resulting from religious discord and the breakdown of tradition social, economic, and political systems. John Donne was not alone in lamenting a world in which everything seemed out of joint:

And new philosophy calls all in doubt,
The element of fire is quite put out,
The sun is lost, and th’earth, and no man’s wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.
And freely men confess that this world’s spent,
When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this

84 Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus: or, Full and plain evidence concerning witches and apparitions in two parts: the first treating of their possibility, the second of their real existence*, with a letter of Henry More . . . (London: printed for J. Collins and S. Lownds, 1700). Henry More edited this work and supplied additional material; Michael Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland: A new edition of Robert Kirk’s The Secret Commonwealth and other texts, with an introductory essay* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001); Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Coudert, *Religion, Magic, and Science* (see note 27), ch. 3.

Is crumbled out again to his atomies.
 'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
 All just supply, and all relation;
 Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot,
 For every man alone thinks he hath got
 To be a phoenix, and that then can be
 None of that kind, of which he is, but he.⁸⁵

In his biography of Calvin, William Bouwsma stresses how much Calvin “abominated” mixture,” the very word being synonymous in his mind with “adulteration” and “promiscuity,” and consequently with confusion, defilement, and disorder. A similar concern with purity and fear of defilement characterized Hapsburg piety.⁸⁶ Descartes was clearly not alone in craving clear and distinct ideas.⁸⁷ For early modern people protecting boundaries, was crucial. The fact that holiness and wholeness are homonyms in English is suggestive in this regard. Calvin, like many Christians, saw heresy and disbelief as an infectious contagion threatening the integrity of the true believer. In post-Reformation Europe the connection between holiness and wholeness applied not simply to the physical body of believers but to the body of scripture as well as the body politic. The porosity of the boundaries of all three had to be closely guarded against the slew of demonic forces that threatened from without. But the threat was not only external. What was new and remarkable in the early modern period was that danger now came from within as well as without, from the menacing physical and emotional drives that made individuals want to literally cannibalize and incorporate everything beyond themselves from food to foreign lands, riches, and people. Because these drives were so threatening and unpredictable they required the kind of constant monitoring and self-scrutiny that both Catholics and Protestants considered necessary for righteous living. Michel Certeau perceptively likens the practice of ferreting out secret, personal sins to the witch hunts that proliferated in society at large.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ John Donne, *An Anatomy of the World* (1611), lines 205–18 in John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. Albert James Smith (London: Penguin, 1986).

⁸⁶ Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca* (1959; West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2004)

⁸⁷ William Bouwsma, *Calvin* (see note 34), 34.

⁸⁸ Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, trans. Michael B. Smith (1982; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 88.

Explaining the Epidemic of Demonic Possession in Early Modern Europe

From the foregoing it appears evident that the early modern period was, indeed, one in which diabolical melancholy flourished, and that, consequently, William Monter's description of the seventeenth century as "the golden age of demoniacs" is fitting. But why should this have been the case? Scholars have debated and still debate this issue. Clearly there is no silver bullet or single explanation, but it is worth evaluating some of the factors that have been suggested. Stuart Clark and Erik Midelfort attribute the sharp rise in cases of demonic possession to increasing pessimism and the tendency to demonize the world.⁸⁹ D. P. Walker focuses on denominational conflict and the use of possession by Catholics and Protestants for propaganda purposes.⁹⁰ Michel Certeau adds the element of power, the power struggle between Protestants and Catholics and the power struggle between religious institutions and their adherents, whose demonic possession allowed them to command care and attention and speak the unspeakable. This latter explanation has been used creatively by Ioan M. Lewis.⁹¹ Ottavia Niccoli takes into account the role of the sensationalist press in this process of demonization: devils sold, as we can see from the number of books, pamphlets, and broadsheets devoted to them.⁹² Dyan Elliott, Nancy Caciola, and Lyndal Roper are among the many authors who put the issues of gender and misogyny front and center.⁹³ Moshe Sluhovsky accepts that misogyny was an important factor but adds that what was really at issue were the new forms of interiorized spirituality that emerged as a result of the Reformation. These forms of spirituality—pietism, illuminism,

89 Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 389–422; H. C. Erik Midelfort, "The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon Possession in Sixteenth-century Germany," *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Stephen Ozment. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 11 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), 99–119, here 101.

90 Daniel P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Scholar, 1981).

91 Ioan M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (1971; London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

92 Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (1987; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

93 Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003); Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus & the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

quietism—challenged ecclesiastical institutions and were particularly associated with women. All these explanations are relevant, and they all reflect the radical disorientation that marks the early modern period.

J. Z. Smith makes the important point that the notion of place is important in a culture's as well as an individual's self-perception. Because cultural change is inseparable from symbolic change, where one "stands" becomes a compelling issue. As Smith says, "At the heart of the issue of change are the symbolic-social questions: What is the place on which I stand? What are my horizons? What are my limits."⁹⁴ Such questions preoccupied, and in some cases terrified—as we have seen—many individuals as they watched traditional modes of belief and behavior disintegrate and valiantly tried either to shore these up or, when that failed, to construct new symbolic structures to accommodate a changing world. Pascal expressed the existential anxiety felt by many of his contemporaries as they found themselves adrift in uncharted waters:

We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes forever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.⁹⁵

People living in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe were confronted by a new view of the universe as the geocentric and finite Aristotelian-Ptolemaic world was supplanted by the Copernican infinite universe. The earth was no longer at the center but a planet like any other, hurtling not only around itself but the sun as well and at unimaginable speed. The notion of place changed dramatically in this brave new world, where there was no clear "up" or "down" and consequently no clear place for heaven or hell. The existential dread stirred up by this new orientation comes out clearly in Pascal's comparison of man to a fragile reed in a vast immensity of uncaring space.⁹⁶ The metaphysical rug, so to speak, upon

⁹⁴ J. Z. Smith, "The Influence of Symbols on Social Change," id., *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion* (Chicago and London: University Press, 1978), 129–46.

⁹⁵ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 42), 72.

⁹⁶ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 42), 347. The consequences of Copernicanism took time to sink in. Robert Westman concludes that before 1600 there were only ten European thinkers who accepted the physical truth of Copernicus's theory. But if the acceptance of Copernicanism was delayed, there were many other cracks developing in the Ptolemaic-Aristotelian worldview that undermined traditional cosmological assumptions: For example, the observations and theories of Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler; Galileo's discovery of sun spots, craters on the moon, and

which Westerns had been standing for over a thousand years was pulled out from under them, but so too was the political, religious, and economic “rug.” Religious conflict irrevocably destroyed the ideal of a united Christendom; the beheading of Charles I challenged the notion of the divine right of kings; the development of proto-capitalism undermined traditional notions of community and reciprocity; and urbanization created new anxieties and challenges for people previously settled in more traditional, rural settings. All these developments taken together with the explosion of print culture and the growth of literacy eroded previously unchallenged norms of belief and behavior, fostered the growth of individualism, and left many individuals in a quandary of doubt:

Entire groups are no longer sure about “obvious facts” that, though not susceptible of proof, were previously taken for granted by a social order and an order and an organization of values. To what will people turn to escape these intolerable shifting sands? How can firm ground be found to replace those certainties now undermined by suspicion, those no longer credible resources and situations henceforth devoid of meaning?

Having raised these questions, Certeau answers them: “Devilries are at once symptoms and transitional solutions.”⁹⁷ Diabolical possession provides a solution to doubt, a safety valve to let off the steam created by the spiritual and mental conflicts experienced by so many individuals as their world was transformed. But possession also fostered those very doubts by calling into question the efficacy of priests, the legitimacy of the Church as an institution, and key aspects of Christian doctrine. Pierre Barré, the cure of Saint-Jacques in Chinon and a specialist in exorcisms who was called in to help at Loudun, recognized this and felt compelled to justify himself and the other exorcists present:

The said Barré, dressed in his priestly vestment, having the custodial in his hands and the body of our Lord therein, pointed out to the whole audience that he knew that many persons were circulating the rumor that he and the religious women and the Carmelites who had assisted them were witches and magicians, and that everything they were doing was nothing but trickery and imposture; that he prayed to God that, if this were the case, not only himself but also all the said Carmelites and religious women, and the whole convent, be confounded and sink into hell. And kneeling, holding the custodial on his head, he repeated the same prayer. And then all the said Carmelites and religious women said in one voice: Amen. The same was also said and done by the prior of the said Carmelites [Antonin

the moons of Jupiter, all of which undermined the idea of the heavens as perfect and unchanging, especially when taken together with new observations of meteors and comets (Robert S. Westman, “The Astronomer’s Role in the Sixteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey,” *History of Science* 18 [1980]: 105–47).

97 Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 2.

de la Charité], also holding the custodial in his hands and placing it on his head, and all said religious and nuns responding as one: Amen.⁹⁸

The threat of skepticism and atheism was taken seriously in the early modern period. Churchmen and lay people alike were convinced both were on the rise and that a fifth column of non-believers were determined to undermine the Christian religion and destroy Christian society. In his treatise *De l'immortalité de l'âme* (1634), Jean de Silhon presses this point home:

Never has the faith been in greater need of being vivified. Never has religion been more dangerously sinned against. It is no longer the roof or the fortifications that are being battered; they are attacking the foot of the wall, undermining the foundations; they're trying to blow up the entire edifice.⁹⁹

Marin Mersenne (1588–1648), the French monk, mathematician, and intellectual, claimed that “Paris alone is afflicted with at least fifty thousand atheists.”¹⁰⁰ The cobbler Jean Boucher, who became a Franciscan, saw the upper class as a hotbed of disbelief: “You will never see a curled moustache that doesn’t continually toss your way his “why?”: Why did God give the world laws . . .? Why is fornication forbidden . . .? Why is the Son of God incarnated?”¹⁰¹ Given this perilous situation, it is not surprising that the demons possessing the nuns at Loudun were the very ones to insist on the truth of Christian revelation. But as Ismaël Bouilliau (1605–1694), a Catholic priest and one of the most celebrated scholars of his age, pointed out, the idea that devils or demons told the truth was farcical. As a supporter of Urbain Grandier—the priest charged with possessing the nuns at Loudun—Bouilliau was shocked that Grandier’s guilt would be based on “the deposition of the devils alone, to which the judges have given credence, against

98 Exorcism of November 25, 1632, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français 2619, fol. 35. Cited in Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 47–8.

99 Jean de Silhon, *De l'immortalité de l'âme* (Paris: Bilaine, 1634), fol. 8. Cited in Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 147. Cf. René Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Annecienne Librairie Furne, 1943); David Berman, *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Michael Hunter and David Wotton, *Atheism in the Age of Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); M. J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); Alan C. Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650–1729: The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (see note 70).

100 Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit* (see note 98), 29–30.

101 Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit* (see note 98), 28–29.

the express doctrine of Saint Thomas and the faculty of Paris.”¹⁰² How was it possible to constrain the “Father of Lies” to tell the truth? This question was raised by the anonymous author of a treatise defending Grandier:

I am astonished at how readily people believe in the Devil, particularly when he accuses the curé [Grandier] or slanders honest folk, making the condition of the Christians worse than that of the pagans who believed in the Devil, but thought him to be God. And we are told that the Devil is a liar and a maligner, and nevertheless we are supposed to believe what he says, particularly when it is something to harm the curé or when he slanders the most virtuous, but if he speaks in defense of Grandier, he is a liar. . . .¹⁰³

Certeau makes the pertinent point that while in the past the word of God provided solace to the afflicted, it is now the afflicted who substantiate the word of God, a reversal that shows how precarious the religious situation had become:

In the past, with the sobriety of the liturgical acts, God’s word had the efficacy to heal the soul and sometimes the body of the possessed woman presented to the benediction and the reading of the Gospel. In Loudun the first objective is no longer the healing of the possessed, but the healing of language, whence the reversal or reorientation of meaning: the goal of action becomes the firming up of the word, shaken by doubt, whereas in the past the sacerdotal word was, by a common faith, oriented toward a sanctifying and pacifying action.¹⁰⁴

According to Midelfort, in Germany incidences of demonic possession occurred most frequently in Catholic nunneries and among gnesio-Lutherans.¹⁰⁵ He surmises that in both cases “the attempt to live a more God-fearing and perfect life may well have led to stronger temptations, harsher pressures, than those felt in other parts of Germany,” and that these temptations and pressures could have encouraged “those pious feelings of doubt, unworthiness, and despair.”¹⁰⁶ Possession allowed individuals to experience and express their temptations, repressed desires, and inner conflicts while at the same disowning them and attributing them to demons. Midelfort utilizes the idea of “vocabularies of discomfort” formulated by Pauline B. Bart as a way to better understand early modern demoni-

102 Letter to Gassendi (September 7, 1634. Cited in Certeau, *The Possessed at Loudun* (see note 98), 147.

103 *Remarques et considérations servant à la justification du curé de Loudun* (1634). Cited in Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 98), 148.

104 Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 144.

105 Lutherans who considered themselves genuine followers of Luther rather than Melancthon, who had modified Luther’s doctrine of predestination and the incorrigible sinfulness of mankind.

106 Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 67, 62.

acs.¹⁰⁷ While their contemporaries were divided as to whether they were frauds, Midelfort contends they were not:

I think it likely that demonic possession provided troubled persons with the means of expressing their often guilty and morally straining conflicts, a vocabulary of gestures, grimaces, words, voices, and feelings with which to experience and describe their sense that they were not fully in charge of their lives or their own thought.¹⁰⁸

This was, indeed, the case for many demoniacs. Cotton Mather describes his attempt to minister to thirteen-year-old Martha Goodwin. Much to his amazement she, or the devil within her, had the temerity to insult him to his face:

her whole carriage to me was with a Sauciness that I had not been us'd to be treated with. She would knock at my Study Door, affirming, That some below would be glad to see me; when there was none that ask't for me. She would call to me with multiplyed Impertinencies, and throw small things at me wherewith she could not give me any hurt. . . . She'd Hector me at a strange rate for the work I was at, and threaten me with I know not what mischief for it.

The next sentences in Mather's account let the cat out of the bag:

She got a History that I had Written of this Witchcraft, and tho she had before this readd it over and over, yet now she could not read (I believe) one entire Sentence of it; but she made of it the most ridiculous Travesty in the World, with such a Patness and excess of Fancy, to supply the sense that she put upon it, as I was amazed at. And she particularly told me, That I should quickly come to disgrace by that History.¹⁰⁹

Martha Goodwin had learned how to perform possession from that great expert on the subject himself, Cotton Mather! In the same way, the nuns at Louviers learned the language and behavior of possession from earlier accounts of possessed nuns at Aix-en-Provence (1611), Lille (1613), and Loudun (1634), accounts that were widely circulated. They followed these earlier scripts to the letter.

Demonic possession offered a strategy and provided a peculiar problem-solving behavior for people who perceived themselves to be unfairly subjugated and denied access to culture and the public sphere. Those most likely to be possessed were people normally dependent and conforming in character confronted with

107 Pauline B. Bart, "Social Structure and Vocabularies of Discomfort: What Happened to Female Hysteria?" *Journal of Health and Human Behavior* 9 (1968): 188–93.

108 Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 14

109 Cotton Mather, "Memorable Providences," *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases*, ed. George Lincoln Burr (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 119.

a internal conflicts and problems that seemed insoluble. While there are many accounts of men who were possessed in the early modern period, women made up the majority of those afflicted. As we have seen in the case of Martha Goodwin, involuntary demonic possession offered young women a means to ventilate their frustrations. It provided an acceptable form of ritualized rebellion, allowing those who were socially and culturally oppressed to turn the tables on their oppressors and make demands, voice grievances, and even insult their superiors with impunity on the ostensible grounds that they are in no way responsible. In societies where women are expected to be chaste, silent, and obedient possession offered women the opportunity to express repressed and socially unacceptable wishes and desires. The possessed are released from normal social and gender constraints, and their behavior is allowed and accepted by their superiors, who are themselves left guiltless.¹¹⁰

If we turn to the two most famous episodes of possession in the seventeenth century, Loudun and Salem, we see the same underlying factors at work. The events that took place in Loudun transformed the convent into a circus, where day after day the nuns, led by their hysterical Abbess Jeanne des Anges, writhed on the floor in extraordinarily graphic sexual positions to the horror of their exorcists and amusement of the crowds who reveled in the spectacle. The nuns were reacting against the stringent sexual mores of the Catholic Church and the practices of a society that denigrated and repressed women, especially those who did not or could not marry. Dowry inflation was a fact of early modern European life,

110 There is a debate among scholars as to whether possession empowered women. Shluhovsky argues that it did: “Possession . . . is one of [the] . . . many forms of female monastic creativity. It was an expression of late medieval and early modern nuns’ active participation in the promotion of new forms of spirituality; it expressed nuns’ involvement in the reform movements of the period and demonstrated the earnestness of nuns’ engagement in their personal spiritual well-being and—no less important—the well-being of the world at large (Shluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit* [see note 53], 242). Certeau agrees: “The possession [at Loudun] is . . . a rebellion of women: women who are aggressive, provocative, exposing to the broad daylight of the exorcisms their desires and demands, beneath the mask of those devils that have many uses. They belong to a time of female regents, woman reformers, female mystic saints or pioneers of literature, a time when *Le Triomphe des dames* is sung and *La galerie des femme fortes* is presented. They are educators, well educated, of good families and of that young congregation of “Amazons” that know the value of obedience but whose religious could often tell their curé a thing or two” (Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* [see note 71], 104). Brian Levack disagrees, claiming that possession, at least in Europe, did not empower subordinate groups. While demoniacs were granted a certain amount of license, possession did little to challenge existing power structures or improve their position in it (Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013]).

which meant that the parents of many young women could not afford to marry them off and dumped them into nunneries instead, where dowry requirements were not as expensive.¹¹¹ Consequently, not all nuns had a vocation or even the slightest inclination for a celibate life, and this was reflected in the numerous scandals involving nuns and nunneries in the early modern period.¹¹² By claiming possession, the nuns at Loudun could give way to their sexual fantasies with impunity, and in the course of doing so gain the attention of male priests and exorcists as well as a certain notoriety to liven up their drab, regimented lives. The exorcists called in to help the nuns took their sexual fantasies as proof of their possession since they were unable to imagine that nuns could possibly know what they were doing or saying. As one of them (de Nion) remarked:

[They] made use of expressions so filthy as to shame the most debauched of men, while their acts, both in exposing themselves and in inviting lewd behavior from those present, would have astounded the inhabitants of the lowest brothel of the country.¹¹³

While the exorcists might have been astonished at the nuns' behavior, many were not. The French physician and poet Claude Quillet (1602–1661) offered a diagnosis of “hysteriomania.” In a letter to his friend and fellow physician Gui Patin, Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653) agreed, anticipating Denis Diderot's analysis in his novel *The Nun* by a hundred years:

It would be better to speak of hystereomania or erotomania . . . Those poor she-devil religious, finding themselves shut up between four walls, go crazy, fall into a melancholic delirium, tortured by the urges of the flesh, and in reality what they need is a carnal remedy in order to be perfectly cured.¹¹⁴

From Naudé's point of view, exorcism was the worst possible cure for religious women because their suggestibility was so great and their craving for attention so intense that exorcism simply fed into their deepest desires and intensified the problem.

Although the possession of the young girls at Salem, which initiated the witch-hunt there, appears to be very different, the factors underlying their behav-

111 Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pt. 1.

112 See, for example, Judith Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

113 Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun* (1952; New York: Harper. Perennial Modern Classic, 2009), 186.

114 Naudé cited in Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (see note 71), 135.

ior are basically similar. The whole affair began when a group of girls met at the house of the Salem minister, Mathew Parrish, and attempted to foretell who their future husbands would be by scrying, a magic technique involving the use of bowls filled with water, in which the reflection of an individual could supposedly be made to appear. Caught in the act, they were terrified of what might be done to them, and instead of confessing, they blamed their action on a number of older women in the Salem community, accusing them of witchcraft. To understand why they acted as they did requires a look at their position in society. As young unmarried women they were the lowest of the low on the social totem pole, and, because they were expected to be chaste, silent, and obedient, any hint of sexuality or even too overt an interest in marriage was deemed unacceptable. Across Europe and America young women in the early modern period were in “a sort of social non-man’s land,” from which they only emerged when husbands had been found for them.¹¹⁵ They had no power and no authority, and they were paid scant attention by the larger society around them. What better way to gain attention and fifteen minutes of fame, so to speak, than to be possessed?

From Demonic Possession to the Medicalization and Aestheticization of Melancholy

The rash of demonic possession that spread through Western Europe in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the product of the turmoil engendered by Reformation and Counter Reformation conflicts. These conflicts took a terrible toll, not only on the individuals who suffered and died as a result of them but on religion itself. While the majority of people continued to be practicing Christians, a significant minority was now alienated from ecclesiastical institutions of any sort. And even those who remained affiliated came to the conclusion that certain forms of religion were themselves a source of madness. What came to be known as “religious enthusiasm” was widely ridiculed, and those who exhibited it, like the Quakers, ferociously attacked.¹¹⁶ Evangelical preachers like George Whitfield (1714–1770) and John Wesley (1703–1791) were greeted with abuse, fury, and satire

115 Cornelia Niekus Moore, *The Maiden’s Mirror: Reading Material of German Girls in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Wolfenbüttler Forschungen, 36 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 24; John P. Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1982).

116 Michael Heyd, “Be Sober and Reasonable”: *The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*. Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History, 63 (Leiden and Boston, MA: E. J. Brill, 1995).

because religious fervor had led James Hadfield to shoot George III. Hadfield claimed he had heard the voice of the Pentecostal preacher Bannister Truelock telling him to commit the crime. Jonathan Martin, the arsonist of Yorkminster, claimed to have heard the same voice egging him on.¹¹⁷ In *Zoonomia* Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) listed fundamentalism as the disease of *orci timor*, which he defined as:

The Fear of Hell.

Many theatric preachers among the Methodists successfully inspire this terror, and live comfortably upon the folly of their hearers. In this kind of madness the poor patients frequently commit suicide; although they believe they run head-long into the Hell which they already dread. Such is the power of oratory, and such the debility of the human understanding!¹¹⁸

Thus the kind of religious melancholy that was once believed to invite demonic possession increasingly came to be deemed a pathological psychological condition and “medicalized.”¹¹⁹ The Dutch physician Johann Weyer (1515–1588) was one of the many physicians described by Midelfort who concluded that possession was a mental malady and had nothing to do with the soul, God, or the devil.¹²⁰ As we have seen, the French physicians Gabriel Naudé and Guy Patin thought sexual intercourse would cure the nuns at Loudun. The English physician Nicholas Robinson concluded that the French prophets, who made such an impression on Londoners at the turn of the eighteenth century, suffered from “strong convulsive fits,” while the Quakers James Nayler and George Fox and the leader of the so-called anti-Trinitarian Muggletonians, Lodowick Muggleton, acted from “meer madness” that “arose from the stronger impulses of a warm brain.”¹²¹

The medicalization of madness had always existed, going back to the Greeks, but it was strengthened as humoralism was challenged by iatrochemistry and the new mechanical physiology connected with nerves and nervous electricity pio-

117 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 86.

118 Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia, or, The Laws of Organic Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1796), vol. 1, class iii, 1.2.15.

119 Thomas H. Jobe, “Medical Theories of Melancholia in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,” *Clio Medica* 19 (1976): 217–31.

120 Midelfort, *A History of Madness* (see note 10), 171–74. David Lederer observes that after 1650 the ruling elite in Bavaria increasingly came to see mental illness as a physical disorder and not a diabolical affliction. David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 227.

121 Cited in Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 87. Cf. Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-century France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

neered by Thomas Willis (1621–1675).¹²² Willis debunked the “wandering womb” theory of female hysteria on empirical physiological grounds:

“... the body of the womb is of so small bulk . . . and is so strictly tyed by the neighbouring parts round about, that it cannot of itself be moved, or ascend from its place . . . The distemper named from the womb [hysteria from *hysteros*, Greek for womb], is chiefly and primarily convulsive, and chiefly depends on the brain and the nervous stock being effected.”¹²³

Dr. John Purcell offered a chemical theory of hysteria, and although it was incredibly vague, it too reduced madness to a physiological condition.¹²⁴ Anton Mesmer believed nervous afflictions could be cured by electrical currents.¹²⁵ George Cheyne attributed every form of lunacy to bad diets.¹²⁶ Patients began to prefer a physical explanation for their melancholy because it minimized their personal responsibility and the guilt and shame that came with it. Richard Baxter, for example, decided that his chronic internal pain and hypochondria came from kidney stones, although the various physicians he consulted (36 in all!) could find no physical cause. When Queen Anne was told by her physician John Radcliffe that she suffered from the “Vapours,” and that there was nothing physically wrong with her, she fired him!¹²⁷

The medicalization of madness went hand in hand with the more positive view of human nature than emerged at the end of the seventeenth century, and this, in turn, was predicated on the rejection of the doctrines of original sin and predestination that were so firmly entrenched in early Protestant thought. In *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* Ernst Cassirer claims that “the concept of original sin is the common opponent against which all the trends of the philosophy of the

122 George Rousseau, “Nerves, Spirits and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility; with a Postscript,” *The Blue Guitar* 2 (1976): 125–53.

123 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 58; Jeffrey M. N. Boss, “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation of the Hysterical Affection,” *Psychological Medicine* 9 (1979): 221–34. Andrew Scull, *Hysteria* (see note 76).

124 John Purcell, *A Treatise of Vapours, or Hysterick Fits* (London: E. Place, 1707), 103–04: “Raving is produced by a mixture of Heterogeneous Particles with the Spirits, which fermenting with them, make their Motion violent and irregular in the Emporium of the Brain, where they do at once irritate a great many little nervous Fibres, and renew many confus’d Ideas of things past. . . .”

125 Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

126 George Cheyne, *The Natural Method of Curing the Diseases of the Body* (London: Printed for George Stahan, 1742).

127 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 65–66.

Enlightenment join forces.”¹²⁸ The rejection of this concept led to what Hans Erich Bödeker has described as “the anthropological revolution,” predicated on the idea that human beings did not come into the world vitiated by original sin; they are born neither good nor bad but endowed with the reason that would shape them into virtuous or reprobate adults.¹²⁹ In the words of Roy Porter, “Politeness and Enlightenment had expunged the true demoniac, the political prophet and the religious Pentacostalist from the players acceptable to the civil stage.”¹³⁰ The tortured and damned souls of sixteenth and seventeenth century demoniacs mutated into Georgian hypochondriacs and later into Romantic melancholy geniuses. But there was another form of melancholy that emerged as well as older and more rigid codes of familial, moral, and religious behavior gave way to new freedoms of expressions and choices. This marked the beginning of modern melancholy centered on growing self-awareness and the doubts and insecurities that come with it.

Terry Castle has discussed the exhilarating freedom that came with urbanization. Moving to cities offered individuals the chance to remake themselves. In the London pleasure gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall people were given an anonymous space in which to refigure themselves as gentlemen or lords and rub shoulders with the “real”—or was it really real?—thing. Masquerading freed people from the constraints of birth, family background, and social status, allowing them to try on a variety of selves.¹³¹ In addition, changing lifestyles and architecture encouraged greater privacy and with it new opportunities for personal development through solitary reading, letter writing and the keeping of diaries, all of which fostered internal reflection and a growing sense of individuality.¹³² But with these new freedoms came new anxieties and pressures to conform to the

128 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (1932; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 141.

129 Hans Erich Bödeker, “Menschheit, Humanität, Humanismus,” *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972–1997), 7:1090–100. Allison P. Coudert, *Religion, Magic, and Science* (see note 27), ch. 6.

130 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 111.

131 Terry Castle, “The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England,” *British Literature, 1640–1789: A Critical Reader*, ed. Robert Demaria Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 251–270; eadem, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

132 Daniel Shanahan, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1992); Jerrold E. Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

new ideals of decorum, politeness, and civility, which though less overtly constraining were no less powerful.¹³³

Locke's sensationalist philosophy and Hume's skepticism brought into question exactly what the self was. Doubts about self-identity supply the comic material for Don Quixote and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, and eighteenth century novels provide a good source for analyzing the effects new ideals of social behavior had on individuals, especially young women like Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa and Fanny Burney's *Evangelina*. *Evangelina* is one of the many young heroines of the time who live in a world without maternal guidance because their mothers were either dead or incompetent or who, in any case, could not have provided their daughters with moral guidelines in a time of such radically changing mores. *Evangelina* has a kindly guardian, Mr. Villars, but he is not with her and can only offer advice by letter as she makes her way and discovers herself in an uncharted and dangerous social world. She must, he says, "learn not only to judge but to act for yourself: if any schemes are started, any engagements made, which your understanding represents to you as improper, exert yourself resolutely in avoiding them, and do not, by a too passive facility, risk the censure of the world, or your own future regret." Mr. Villars only increased the pressure on *Evangelina* by ending his letter with the following exhortation: "Remember, my dear *Evangelina*, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman: it is, at once, the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things."¹³⁴ Time and time again *Evangelina* finds herself in compromising situations, one of which occurs in the pleasure garden of Ranleigh, that humiliate her, make her pale and ill, and throw her into fits of melancholy because she is at a loss for how she is to maintain the decorous behavior expected of her: "I would fain encourage more cheerful thoughts, fain drive from my mind the melancholy that has taken possession of it—but I cannot succeed . . ."¹³⁵ Diderot's reluctant nun Suzanne suffers from the same perplexity of how to live up to social expectations. Like Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa, both of whom provided the model

133 Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans Edmund Jephcott (1939; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000); Wolfgang Weber, "Im Kampf mit Saturn: Zur Bedeutung der Melancholie im anthropologischen Modernisierungsprozess des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 17 (1990): 155–92; David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex and Civility in England, 1660–1740* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

134 Fanny Burney, *Evangelina*. Oxford World's Classic (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166.

135 Burney, *Evangelina* (see note 134), 258.

for Suzanne, Diderot exposes Suzanne to situations that test her mettle to its limits.¹³⁶

For some people living in the eighteenth century the existential dilemmas of human existence had descended from heaven to earth to be greeted with laughter rather than thunder bolts from on high. The fact that we may not know exactly who or what we are and that we have only a slim grasp of reality had become a source of humorous satire. Sterne has his hero Tristram Shandy muse about the limitations of human understanding:

We live amongst riddles and mysteries—the most obvious things, which come in our way, have dark sides, which the quickest sight cannot penetrate into; and even the clearest and most exalted understandings amongst us find ourselves puzzled and at a loss in almost every cranny of nature's works.¹³⁷

As Roy Porter points out, “Sterne writes not as a stern moralist but in the comic vein.”¹³⁸ Problems that had previously belonged in the religious sphere had slipped, at least for some adventurous spirits, into the realm of aesthetics. In his essay on the “Pleasures of the Imagination,” Addison claims that fictions of the mind are not simply sources of error but of pleasure as well:

. . . our Souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing Delusion, and we walk about like the Enchanted Hero of a Romance, who sees beautiful Castles, woods and meadows, and at the same time hears the warbling of Birds, and the purling of Streams; but upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastick Scene breaks up, and the disconsolate Knight finds himself in a barren Heath, or in a solitary Desert.¹³⁹

Each one of us is, in short, Don Quixote! But this is no longer a problem because, as Addison goes on to say, “Indeed the Ideas and Colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the Imagination that it is possible the Soul will not be deprived of them . . .” The delusions that beset the man from La Mancha can now be enjoyed, even relished, and the witches, fairies, ghosts, and goblins that had so agitated previous generations offer individuals the frissons of mental and emotional delight that became a staple of Gothic fiction. But not all of Addison's contemporaries were as sanguine about the pleasures of the imagination since the imagination

136 Dennis Diderot, *The Nun*. Oxford's World Classics (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

137 Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundation of Body and Soul* (New York and London: W. W Norton & Company, 2003), 299.

138 Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (see note 136), 298.

139 Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (see note 138), 298.

could prove perilous, leading in extreme cases to madness and the dissolution of the self. Thus while the aestheticizing of the supernatural in Gothic fiction could and did prove pleasurable to many readers, there was a darker underside to this literature that revealed the psychological battles facing individuals struggling to fashion themselves in a new and modern world.

The Return of the Demonic

There was therefore both an aestheticizing as well as a more sinister psychologizing aspect of the supernatural that emerges with the “The Grave-yard” School of poetry in Britain and the subsequent European-wide emergence of Gothic fiction. Both the poets of the “Graveyard School” and Gothic novelists reveled in Gothic ruins, church yards, coffins, epitaphs, ravens, yew trees, charnel houses, ghosts, sad virgins, pale knights, rapes, murders, abductions, torture, mutilation, terror, and horror. Gothic fiction capitalizes on the ambiguity of the readers, torn between the attractions and terrors of a past controlled by aristocrats and priests and the forces of change. In his article, “The Invention of the American Gothic,” Leslie Fiedler explains this dynamic as an oedipal battle between generations:

The guilt which underlies Gothic and motivates its plots is the guilt of the revolutionary haunted by the (paternal) past, which he has been trying to destroy; and the fear that possesses the Gothic and motivates its tone is the fear that in destroying the old ego-ideals of Church and State, the West has opened a way for the interruption of darkness: for insanity and the disintegration of the self.¹⁴⁰

Gothic melancholy encapsulated the self-awareness that came from an acute appreciation of the transitory nature of life and inevitability of death. Keat’s *Ode to Melancholy* claims that melancholy “dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die; / And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips / Bidding adieu.” Thus melancholy has its own special pleasures, pleasures that appeal to those exquisite souls aware of the finiteness of life. Thomas Warton exhorts melancholy to come to him

O lead me, queen sublime, to solemn glooms
Congenial with my soul: to cheerless shades,
To ruin’d seats, to twilight cells and bow’rs,

140 Leslie Fiedler, “Invention of the American Gothic,” id., *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960; Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 120.

Where thoughtful Melancholy loves to Muse,
Her favorite midnight haunts.¹⁴¹

Elizabeth Carter's "Ode to Melancholy" perfectly captures the elegiac mood of what came to be called "The English Malady" in the eighteenth century:

COME, Melancholy! Silent power,
Companion of my lonely hour,
To sober thought confin'd;
Thou sweetly sad idea guest. In all they soothing charms confest,
Indulge my pensive mind.¹⁴²

As Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl argue, this is an essentially modern melancholy that began with Milton's *Il Penseroso*: "What emerges here is the specifically "poetic" melancholy mood of the modern . . . This modern melancholy mood is essentially an enhanced self-awareness, since the ego is the pivot round which the sphere of joy and grief revolves. . . ." ¹⁴³

While this kind of pensive melancholy was enjoyed by most eighteenth century melancholics, terrible grief and ruination ensnared others. The psychomachy of modern melancholics no longer lay in the battle of God and Devil over their souls but in their own divided, unstable, and demonic selves. Goethe's Werther (first published in 1774, rev. publication in 1787) is just such a melancholic, and his melancholy and despair drive him to suicide.¹⁴⁴ Werther's suicide was said to have encouraged a rash of suicides among young, romantic, and melancholic readers of his tale. In his *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell* (1795–1796), Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) presents his hero as a melancholy enthusiast, whose quest for novel and dangerous excitements leads him to seduction, murder, madness, and death.¹⁴⁵ One of Ludwig Achim von Arnim's most powerful stories, "Majoratsherren," describes an elder son whose suppressed, subconscious self overwhelms his conscious one. Stories like these describing the dissolution of the self become more common in the nineteenth century, a case in point being Robert Louise Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). But their appearance at the end of the

¹⁴¹ Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 103.

¹⁴² Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 104.

¹⁴³ Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Born Under Saturn* (see note 27), 231.

¹⁴⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, transl. by Thomas Carlyle and R. D. Boylan. Ed. Nathan Haskell Dole (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ In their essay in this volume, Westhagen and Karnitscher discuss Jakob Böhme's epistemology of melancholy and the influence it had on Tieck and the informal circle of young Romantics around the Schlegel brothers.

eighteenth century reflects the breakdown of traditional norms that freed individuals and made them more self-aware but in doing so forced them to be more self-reliant and hence more vulnerable.¹⁴⁶

“The Great Confinement”

One final issue needs to be addressed, namely the claim put forward by Michel Foucault and picked up by other scholars that the eighteenth century was the age of confinement. Foucault asserts that the age of reason set out to nullify unreason. Lacking reason, the mad were perceived as brute animals, locked up in cages, shackled in chains, and beaten with whips. In the late eighteenth century this changed. The mad were liberated from their chains, but they were now treated like wayward children who needed to learn self-control. Madness was reduced to silence and unreason was “shut up” in every sense as “The Great Confinement” escalated.¹⁴⁷ Klaus Doerner follows Foucault’s lead, claiming that the age of reason put all forms of unreason under lock and key.¹⁴⁸ Both Foucault and Doerner argue that psychiatry was developed by the bourgeoisie to confine the poor, who as a result of the Protestant work ethic were now seen as vice-ridden laggards. Taking his cue from Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Doerner blames capitalistic individualism for this negative attitude toward the poor. Doerner agrees with Foucault that the eighteenth century was the period when central authorities gained power, and standardization, rationalism, and intrusion became key features of newly centralized, bureaucratic

146 Eric A. Blackall, *The Novels of the German Romantics* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1983); E. J. Clery “The Genesis of “Gothic” Fiction,” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21–47; Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Urbana, IL, and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Martin Myrone, *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (London: Tate Publishing, 2006).

147 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Madness in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988). This English translation is an extreme abridgement of Foucault’s original *Folie et déraison à l’âge classique* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1961). An enlarged edition of this was published in 1972 (*Histoire de la Folie à l’âge classique* [Paris: Gallimard, 1972]). This enlarged edition was published in English in 2006 (Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jan Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa [London and New York: Routledge, 2006]).

148 Klaus Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Madness and Insanity*, trans. J. Neugroschel and Jean Steinberg (1969; Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).

regimes. Michael McDonald concurs, referring to the “cruel” and “catastrophic” asylum system that made “the eighteenth century . . . a disaster for the insane.”¹⁴⁹

Historians are dramatically divided in their assessment of Foucault’s view of madness in the classical age. Robert Mandrou called the book “beautiful” and argued that it was critical for understanding the classical period.¹⁵⁰ Mandrou’s opinion was seconded by Doerner and MacDonald, as we have seen, as well as others. But there was also considerable criticism. Erik Midelfort, for example, claims that many of Foucault’s criticisms “fly in the face of empirical evidence”; that his generalizations are often over-simplified; and that trying to define the episteme, or the overall essence of the classical age, is a pipe dream.¹⁵¹ Lawrence Stone, Ian Hacking, Dominick La Capra, and Roy Porter concur but for different reasons. But whether favorable or unfavorable all Foucault’s critics agree that mental illness is a variable social construct and that the history of madness is an essential part of the history of reason, even if Foucault’s work cannot qualify as “good,” meaning empirically based, history.¹⁵²

Roy Porter presents the most cogent criticism of Foucault on empirical grounds: “Foucault’s revisionism cannot . . . be more than partially accepted, for it does not fit the facts, at least for England.”¹⁵³ It is true that horror stories circulated about naked, manacled, and beaten lunatics, who lived in foul and unsanitary conditions. James Norris—an insane American imprisoned in Bedlam—was a case in point. He was locked up and so tightly chained that he could barely move. But instead of proving Foucault, Doerner, and MacDonald’s point out the horrible cruelty of asylums, the public outcry and parliamentary investigation that ensued once Norris’s situation became public undermines their argument. While there certainly were asylums where patients suffered from gross neglect, there were others like St. Patrick’s in Dublin, founded by Jonathan Swift, which treated patients humanely. Attitudes toward the insane were therefore more complex

149 Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge History of Medicine (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 230.

150 Robert Mandrou, “Trois clefs pour comprendre la folie à l’âge classique,” *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 17 (1962): 761–72.

151 H. C. Erik Midelfort, “Madness and Civilization in Early Modern Europe: A Reappraisal of Michel Foucault,” *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara Malament (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 247–66.

152 Gary Gutting, “Foucault and the History of Madness,” *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47–70.

153 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 19.

than Foucault, Doerner, or MacDonald allow. Both elite and popular culture came increasingly to sympathize with the mad and even sentimentalized their predicament. This more positive attitude went hand-in-hand with a burgeoning cult of sensibility and the indictment and repudiation of cruelty to children and animals.¹⁵⁴

Finally there is no evidence to support the thesis that in the eighteenth century lunatics affronted the work ethic of the middle class, an idea that is central to Foucault's argument and taken up by Doerner.¹⁵⁵ In Britain a great many of the patients in the small number of private and public asylums that existed were themselves middle or upper class. The physician George Cheyne (1671–1743), was one of many who argued that melancholy had become “The English Malady,” and that it particularly affected the well-off, who were negatively affected by “the Richnesse and Heaviness of our Food, the Wealth and Abundance of Inhabitants (from their universal Trade), [and] the Inactivity and sedentary occupations of the better sort (among whom this Evil mostly rages).” Nervous diseases were class specific; they affected those “who have a great deal of sensibility, are quick thinkers, feel pleasure and pain most readily, and are of most lively imagination.”¹⁵⁶ Other experts agreed that suffering from melancholy could be symptomatic of well-being as well as a sign of a more refined and delicate nature. James Boswell blamed his fits of depressive melancholy on the guilt inspired by his Scottish Calvinist upbringing—and given Boswell's conduct there was quite enough for him to be guilty about—but he also reveled in the idea that “we *Hypochondriaks* may console ourselves in the hour of gloomy distress, by thinking that our suffering makes our superiority.”¹⁵⁷ Boswell wrote a column under the pseudonym “Hypochondriak.” Unlike his idol Samuel Johnson, he did not identify melancholy with madness. Johnson was quite right in sensing that Boswell was proud of his melancholia:

154 G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007); See also the contributions to *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, & Ethics*, ed. Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

155 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 20

156 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 92.

157 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 96. Boswell's brother John was confined to an asylum as a result of his melancholy depressive state.

You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude from those complaints that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is desirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed.¹⁵⁸

Porter goes further when he argues that the sequestration of the insane was hardly “great” in the eighteenth century. In England the provision of public asylums only became mandatory in 1845. Toward the end of the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century there are estimates that some 2,500 people were detained as lunatics, while a further 2,200 pauper lunatics were confined. Incarceration rates were also low in Spain, Portugal, Russia, Scandinavia, Ireland, and Poland, where there was in actuality little confinement of lunatics, but when they were incarcerated, lunatics were put into the care of religious institutions, not the state.¹⁵⁹ It is therefore hyperbolic for Foucault to speak of “The Great Confinement” and MacDonald to state that the asylum system spread “throughout the nation” in the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁰ If there was an age of “great confinement,” it occurred in the nineteenth and not before.¹⁶¹

Centralization was also not a factor in eighteenth-century England. After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, social regulation and welfare were taken care of in the shires by squires, Justices of the Peace, and parish overseers. The state did not involve itself in regulating asylums, which were for the most part private and local institutions, just as the state did not take a lead in industrial regulation or public health. Protestants were actually less good than Catholics in providing institutions to help the unfortunate. The dissolution of the monasteries and chantries largely obliterated the hospices, almshouses, and refuges that had been woven into the fabric of medieval Catholicism. The laissez-faire attitude of the English government did allow, however, for considerable experimentation and innovation in dealing with the insane. Mechanical chairs, swings, and medical electricity offered new therapeutic technologies that supplanted the humoral therapies restricted to blood-letting, vomits, and purges.¹⁶² What good any of these innovations did is another question.

Scholars who argue for “The Great Confinement” may have been misled in part by the consensus among contemporaries that madness was increasing to epidemic proportions. Porter notes the plethora of Jeremiads bemoaning the social

158 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 96.

159 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 20–21.

160 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 20.

161 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 23.

162 Porter, *Madmen* (see note 17), 23; Stanley W. Jackson, “Melancholia and the Waning of the Humoral Theory,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 33 (1978): 367–76.

disintegration occasioned by increasing affluence, luxury, and rampant individualism. But he insists these Jeremiads say much more about the authors who wrote them than about any real epidemic of insanity. As we have seen, the number of people actually incarcerated was very low.¹⁶³

Whatever one thinks of Foucault's thesis, it had the positive effect of stimulating research on insanity and bringing the insane from the margins to the center. As historians have increasingly come to realize, we form our identities in opposition to others. Rationality cannot be understood without investigating what was considered irrational, and this determination changed historically. "Fools for Christ" was a concept that resonated in the Middle Ages as well as with Erasmus, who lambasted Folly in his satire *In Praise of Folly* until the very end, when he praises Christian folly for rejecting the world and what it offers.

The notion of identity formation as a function of opposition was the premise for Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), namely that men defined themselves in opposition to women. From the publication of de Beauvoir's book onwards the notion of "the other" has been an extremely fruitful way for historians to understand identity formation in different historical periods. Recent research in American history, for example, has revealed the important role Native Americans played in shaping the identities of colonists. Native Americans were essentially demonized and seen as the antithesis of what constituted a worthy individual and good citizen.¹⁶⁴

Foucault's description of the eighteenth century as "The Great Age of Confinement" had a political agenda. His book was written in the sixties and represented the suspicion that many people had at the time had and still have of institutions of any kind, from governments to psychiatric hospitals. There were good reasons for these suspicions. Foucault's view of the age of the Enlighten-

163 In "Foucault and the History of Madness" (see note 151), Gary Gutting claims that on empirical grounds Porter may win the day, but this misses the main point of Foucault's analysis, which is not to make empirical generalization but "to construct the categorical system that lays behind what was no doubt a very diverse range of beliefs and practices" (Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 61). Foucault's approach to history is idealist rather than empirical, and the only way to dispute or refute his contention that the classical age was the age of confinement is to address this larger issue, which basically presents a theoretical approach to the age: "So far there have been no decisive tests of the truthfulness of Foucault's complex interpretative framework. What is still needed . . . is an assessment of his overall picture of classical madness through detailed deployments of its specific interpretative categories . . . How much explanatory power is there [for example] in his claim that classical confinement involved a reduction of all sexual offenses to the norms of bourgeois morality" (66–67).

164 Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage, 2003).

ment therefore reflected the environment in which he lived and wrote. This is true of every historian. Ernst Cassirer's positive view of the Enlightenment as a period of reason and science reflected his support of the Weimar government and rejection of National Socialism. Peter Gay's view of the Enlightenment as a resurgence of paganism reflected the theory of secularization regnant at the time he wrote.¹⁶⁵ Jonathan Sheehan's revised view of the Enlightenment as a period of great religiosity reflects the contemporary US, where religion has clearly made great inroads into politics.¹⁶⁶ As we can see, historians are inevitably products of their cultures and project their cultural interests onto the periods they study. This should not lead us to give up on history. On the contrary, an awareness on the part of historians of their own subjectivity can allow for a fruitful investigation of historical documents in the light of issues that the historical players themselves may not have consciously recognized but which can enhance our knowledge of their lives.¹⁶⁷ In this way, Foucault has been a boon to historians, just as Max Weber was with his conception of "The Protestant Ethic" and Frances Yates with her conviction that "Hermeticism" played an important role in fostering the Scientific Revolution, not to mention the host of historians who have proffered theories that have been modified or discredited. One does not have to be right to be provocative. Madness is indeed worthy of many histories, and the important way it played out in the early modern period is crucial for an understanding of that period.

165 Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism*, vol. 1 (1967; New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1995).

166 Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

167 But only up to a point according to Constantin Fasolt's provocative book, *The Limits of History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

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A Postmodern Perspective on Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion

Bridging Humanities and Scientific Views of Religion in the Twenty-First Century

How we believe, not *what* we believe, is the important measure for mental health. Mental health is dependent on our belief system. The whole spectrum of non-belief (including atheism, “spiritual but not religious,” “religious but not spiritual,” all the way to religious fundamentalism) are all forms of belief. I will examine mental health on the basis of the concept of self that is larger than conscious experienced facts. The consciousness of self is more inclusive than empirical consciousness. There is a subliminal self at the threshold of our awareness that is part of the belief system we construct to maintain our mental health.¹ This belief system is based on the experience of an ‘overbelief.’ Overbelief as a term was first coined by William James. I will use the term to imply the surplus of meaning and experience every one of us brings to our mental consciousness and the way we experience reality.² Overbelief is the framework of meaning-giving we project onto reality. Thus, the constructs of the world we believe in may be framed in religious belief structures or staunch unbelief; we all believe in more than is simply presented by creating a context of surplus value. This intricate form of forming a mental picture of reality is the basis for mental health and closely related to how we believe.

Though the modernists predicted the decline and eventual demise of religion, articulated in the secularization thesis, in the postmodern world of globalization and cyber interconnectedness, religion’s dogmatic voice has never ceased to be a formative force. With the exception of western and central Europe, Berger even claims that there is “a veritable explosion of passionate religion.”³ However, there has arisen a new category of *nones*, a neologism identifying the religious

1 James Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (1920; New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), 45–46.

2 The term *overbelief* is taken from William James and will be explored more in depth later in this paper. See notes 41–42.

3 Peter Berger articulates the rejection of the secularization thesis most succinctly in his address to the Center of Public Studies (CEP, Centro de Estudios Públicos) on March 1, 2005: *Global Pluralism and Religion*. (2005), 3; available at www.cepchile.cl/dms/archivo_3532_1879/r98_berger_ing.pdf (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

unaffiliated, which is a group emerging prominently in the statistical driven research fields, *nones* are an interesting new rubric in which to look at the postmodern perspective on mental health, spirituality and religion.⁴

The focus of this chapter is to give a postmodern perspective to the question of mental health in regard to religion and spirituality. By necessity, the fundamental theoretical framework needs to be discussed, as the postmodern perspective relates to a fragmented worldview where religion and spirituality have been pushed to the outer boundaries of the academic debate on mental health throughout the twentieth century to resurface with a vengeance in the twenty-first. I will trace the suspenseful relationship between the rise of the modern scientific paradigm and the question of religion and mental health. Though atheism and reductionist medical materialism seem to win the academic argument within psychology and psychiatry throughout the twentieth century, a vocal humanistic framework of mental health realizing the benefits of religious belief structures is emerging at the beginnings of the twenty-first century. In this paper the implications of the contentious debate is analyzed between the atheistic Freudian point of view that defines religion as a collective neurosis and William James's pragmatic assertion for the vitality of the religious experience.

A 2012 study called "Nones"on the Rise"⁵ was released by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a research center that conducts social science research, using surveys and demographic analyses on important aspects of religion and public life in the U.S. and around the world. These *nones*-defined as religiously unaffiliated, those who choose "none of the above" in response to a question about religious affiliation, are often assumed to be atheists. However, of these only 2.4 %, according to the 2012 Pew report, are professed non-believers, the *a-thos*, those who profess a definite disbelief in the existence of God. Most are spiritual, just *not* religious; humanist but *not* theist, believing but *not* belonging. The rejection of religious labels is a denouncement of institutional belonging, not of spiritual belief. The oxymoron of "spiritual atheist" is alive and well, and a growing phenomenon of the early twenty-first century.⁶

⁴ For those called religious unaffiliated, see the Pew Forum poll, "'Nones' on the Rise," *Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project* (October 9, 2012); available at <http://www.pewforum.org/Unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

⁵ See Pew Forum, "'Nones' on the Rise (see note 4).

⁶ Scott Atran and Joe Henrich, "The Evolution of Religion: How Cognitive By-products, Adaptive Learning Heuristics, Ritual Displays, and Group Competition Generate Deep Commitments to Prosocial Religion," *Biological Theory* 5 (2010): 18–30; Gillian Flaccus, "Atheist 'Mega-Churches' Take Root across the US, World," *Yahoo News*, November 10, 2013. Available at <http://news>.

The creation of meaning and value in one's life is personal for the religiously unaffiliated nones. The widening spectrum of belief-making in our present times spans from the total rejection of any transcendental reality affirming only the material reality of life (atheist), to militant fundamentalists, who reject modernization and specifically the de-spiritualization of the world. What they need is the opposite of the New Atheist, which is the forcibly revival of a theocratic rules world. With the rise of nones the belief spectrum is widening, not as secularist once predicted, shrinking. If one looks at a map of beliefs about God across the globe, rates of agnosticism and atheism are correlated with the GDP of a country. Does this make nonbelief a luxury?⁷ Religiosity, as defined by the Pew Forum by measuring attendance of religious services or frequency of prayer, is negatively correlated with affluence across the world, except within the United States. The allowance of religious pluralism is another factor as some countries prescribe by law what one must believe. Think of China, an atheistic state, or Bangladesh, which is 99% Muslim.⁸ Globalization and cyber connectivity has brought the deconstruction of 'absolute values,' such as the modernist belief in human reason, purpose and progress, which Jean-Francois Lyotard famously coined as "metanarratives."⁹ Nonetheless, belief in deconstructed value remains. To all human cognition there is a narrative that provides coherence and understanding. The spectrum from belief to nonbelief has expanded, but it is fallacious to conclude that therefore there is less belief, be it non-belief, spiritual or religious constructed.

The belief in the deconstruction of absolute values such as religion and faith are concepts of postmodernism. Postmodern refers to a theory that postulates the breakdown and fracturing of the 'grand narratives' especially in the West. It dismantles the confidence in the progress and advancement of science and denies any realities that can be progressively known. For some scholars 'postmodern' is a term only of the first half of the twentieth century where scientific normative thinking and philosophy of science realized its own paradigmatic nature and therefore

yahoo.com/atheist-mega-churches-root-across-us-world-214619648.html (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

⁷ This statement would imply that non-belief is a luxury, which we will return to later, see note 67. Catherine Caldwell-Harris, "Understanding Atheism/Non-belief as an Expected Individual-Differences Variable," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 2 (2012): 4–23.

⁸ Tom Smith, *Beliefs about God across Time and Country* (Chicago: NORC/University of Chicago, 2012). Available at http://www.norc.org/PDFs/Beliefs_about_God_Report.pdf (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

⁹ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1979).

pluralistic fragmentation.¹⁰ Rejecting the positivistic unity approach where there are authoritative concepts of rationality and falsification as litmus tests, the postmodern era begins in earnest in the 1960s. The metanarrative schemes of before are now replaced in favor of hermeneutics and phenomenology.¹¹ For the context of this paper, postmodern refers to the development of pluralism and choice that has been the result of this breakdown and the dangerous pitfalls of its fragmentation. In the context of a postmodern perspective on mental health, spirituality, and religion, there is no unbiased rationality and objective empiricism that will lead the way when moral choices and value-laden judgments are called for. There is always an assumed or unconsciously projected transcended dimension of surplus meaning that effects all meaning making; may it be defined in strict atheistic or in the most fundamental religious terms.¹² Religion and spirituality echo Aristotle's dictum that knowledge is reasoning and art, never one over the other.

The Gap Between Science and Humanity: Homo sapiens

"All men by nature desire to know," is Aristotle's dictum at the beginning of *Metaphysics*, book 1. He goes on to speak about humans' delight of the senses (in contrast to animals) and continues, "The animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings." Aristotle makes the point that knowledge and understanding are an art, not just reasoning. Science is based on the ability to reason about the experience of the senses, make sense of the connected experiences; yet he supposes artists to be wiser than 'men of experience.'¹³ Aristotle's aphorism to know as a scientist and understand as an artist seems to have been split in the twentieth century and shows signs of reunification in the twenty-first.

10 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

11 Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (1975; New York: Sheed & Ward and the Continuum Publishing Group, 2004); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); David Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons., 1997).

12 Peter Berger, "Global Pluralism and Religion," *Estudios Públicos* 98 (Autumn 2005): 1–13; available at www.cepchile.cl/dms/archivo_3532_1879/r98_berger_ing.pdf (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

13 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I; available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

Science and technology have mastered reductive reasoning. Aristotelian logic and observational methodology have given rise to Western prowess. Science and the scientific paradigm rule academia and technological innovation in power and prestige. We have championed the ability to manipulate the natural world and are able to deduce reality to ever smaller compounds down to the theorized atomic levels and beyond. Reductive reasoning is claimed as the greatest gift of science, where complex phenomena can be retraced to their fundamental components. However, as Aristotle notes from the outset, reasoning requires art. Deduction does not solve the whole problem. Reduction does not end with its smallest denominator, but the goal of the scientific endeavor lies in the reconstruction of complexity. The goal of reduction is not to explain complex social and religious phenomena in psychophysiological terms and thus invalidating its importance. The reduction of observed phenomena to testable principles—though at the heart of the scientific process—should not stop there but serve to discover new laws on higher levels.¹⁴

To give an example, molecular biology has championed the methodological reduction down to the lowest levels in order to understand the chemical basis of numerous living processes. It has brought phenomenal progress to science through techniques. However, this approach has found its limits when it comes to integrating multilevel analysis of larger systems on a higher level. Biological systems are extremely complex. A reconstruction of this complex interaction is needed and the emergence of new laws is possible, which cannot be explained or even predicted by the individual parts.¹⁵ Biology is representative for the science as a whole, where biological principles are reduced to chemistry and chemistry reduces its principles to physics. Interestingly only physics, the most elemental of the basic sciences, resorts directly back to philosophy through theoretical physical paradigms.¹⁶ As Ian Barbour, a professor emeritus of physics and specialist on the intersection between science and religion once observed: “The rules of chess limit the possible moves but leave open an immense number of possibilities that are consistent with but not determined by those moves.”¹⁷ Reduction of the observable phenomena to testable principles is just half of the process. “The

¹⁴ Wulff, *Psychology of Religion* (see note 11), 14.

¹⁵ Marc H. V. Van Regenmortel, “Reductionism and Complexity in Molecular Biology: Scientists Now Have the Tools to Unravel Biological Complexity and Overcome the Limitations of Reductionism,,” *EMBO Reports* 5 (2004): 1016–20.

¹⁶ Interesting to note here that of all the basic sciences such as biology and chemistry, only physics has a branch called theoretical physics.

¹⁷ Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers or Partners?* (New York: HarperOne, 2000), 110.

remainder consists of the reconstruction of complexity by an expanding synthesis under the control of laws newly demonstrated by analysis.”¹⁸ The compilation of the fundamental parts back into a comprehensive theory on a higher level is complicated and often forgotten. New and unexpected principles can emerge on higher levels where the single parts do not explain the whole.

The ever-widening split between the humanities and the sciences is proof of these miscommunications. Exaggerated by the fact that the basic natural sciences hold the power of the purse, the humanities have overall resented the method of reduction. Quantification of knowledge often sacrifices qualitative depth as it loses sight of the vast complexities and intricacies of the whole. On the other side, the humanities have championed fiction over fact, art over hard data, exaggerating the discrepancy between the two ways of knowing: reason and art. In this light the sciences have lost sight of the art in reasoning, especially when it comes to spirituality and religion, as religion seems increasingly unreasonable and even fanciful to some. My point is, we need both and both require art and reasoning, as Aristotle claimed. In order to understand how to integrate multiple levels of experience, phenomena must be understood at their basic level, only in the end to reintegrate information on a higher and emerging level of understanding. Both these steps require sound critical reasoning as well as creative understanding. Making sense of this world, explaining life in its vast complexities, let alone addressing questions of religion and spirituality; these questions cannot be answered by the rational reasoning of science alone. The art of understanding requires a vision of a greater whole. Reconstruction of complexity is an art form, and this reconstructive artist in the end will be the wiser. Religion and spirituality are examples of a novel level of understanding adding to more than the sum of its parts.

Meaning-Making as a Religious ‘Act’: *Gottsucher*

Humans are in the meaning-making business. Some evolutionary biologists and neuroscientists claim we are hard-wired to make sense not only of our own life but that of others.¹⁹ Religion is either seen as an adaptive or maladaptive by-product of our evolutionary history based on our cognitive hypersensitive ‘agency

¹⁸ Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 11.

¹⁹ Dean Hamer, *The God Gene* (New York: Doubleday, 2004); Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Andrew Newberg, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York and Toronto: Ballantine, 2001).

detection device.²⁰ Good or bad, we are inherently a social species with an inherent ability to conjure up supernatural agents. We can't survive alone and need our social surroundings to flourish, and religion is argued to be one of the best ways to bind a group together and produce that needed feeling of belonging through the meta-structure of belief and dogma.²¹

In psychology the human search for meaning is studied in the context of cognition, motivation, and social living.²² That all men desire to know is scientifically understood as 'cognitive structures,' yet the term meaning-making, or Aristotle's sense of connected experience, art, and wisdom includes a sense of significance that is missing in modern empirical research. We are biologically endowed to create meaning, but how do we do it?²³ One attempt has been the attribution theory, which is a cognitive scientific framework to explain causality in the context of personal-dispositional concerns and behavior.²⁴ Making sense of life and adding meaning and purpose to a life worth living seems not just a rational enterprise but a true art form. Meaning making is one of these emergent properties where many experiences and impressions are synthesized to a complex understanding also addressed as overbelief.

We are *Gottsucher* by nature, Max Scheler claims, god-seekers.²⁵ Metaphysically, Aristotle already expanded knowledge beyond the experiential realm. The human individual has the capacity for one universal judgment based on many notions gained by experience. We are endowed to seek for more than just what our senses present to us in single instances. We are able to connect memories, make connections, differentiate, and integrate various experiences. We create

20 Justin L. Barrett and A. H. Johnson, "The Role of Control in Attributing Intentional Agency to Inanimate Objects," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 3.3 (2003): 208–17.

21 Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 288–95.

22 Ralph Hood, Peter Hill, and Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (New York: Guilford Press, 2009).

23 Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (Hillsdale and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1958). This book is the first to conceptualize attribution theory. Bernard Weiner, *Achievement Motivation and Attribution Theory* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1974); Bernard Weiner, *An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotions*, Springer Series in Social Psychology (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986). See also Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

24 Bernard Spilka, P. Shaver, and L. A. Kirkpatrick, "General Attribution Theory for the Psychology of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24 (1985): 1–20.

25 Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. Bernard Noble (1921; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010).

categories and meaning systems to make sense of all our different sense impressions.

How we make sense of the world around us is quite diverse. When we project our cognitive abilities on to the experienced world, as we perceive it, we order them in a way that makes sense to us. It is not an option, we do it inherently. We can do no less. We add meaning to situations; expand single impressions to a narrative that creates a coherent understanding. That is all implied in the neurobiology of spiritual and religious belief and experience. All peoples throughout history have been found to hold supernatural belief forms, transcendental realities such as God, deities, angels, spirits. Technically, ethologists have coined this as heliotropic experiences, where all living organisms seek, not only physically, but also mentally, to orientate themselves toward the existential experience of the sun. The long arch from light to enlightenment describes how plants, animals, and human alike respond sympathetically to light.²⁶ Our minds are inherently primed to seek the eternal, Scheler adds, infusing nature with transcendental forms of meaning, value, and achievement. Scientists are squabbling how best to reduce this human phenomenon either to a biological psychology and photobiology,²⁷ evolutionary theories to brain structures of the temporal lobes of the ‘God spot,’ or even further to the neurophysiology of the so called ‘God module.’²⁸

From Scheler’s phenomenological point of view, we perform ‘value’ acts, as it is the behavioral response to the world we live in which expects reciprocity, an answer.²⁹ Otto Gründler noted in 1922 that action is not based on mere perception, but one of grasping the value of a situation.³⁰ This higher-level cognition is essential. Both value and reciprocity would involve a higher level of understanding, not present on a reduced fragmented understanding of the biological origin of the spiritual quest. Experiencing the value of an event demands a response. This response can be manifold, complex, and as Aristotle would add, requires art and knowledge to make sense of the multitude of impressions. We react to our environment not only by experiencing it on a visceral level, answering it inter-

26 O. L. Reiser, “The Biological Origins of Religion,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 19 (1932): 1–22.

27 Interdisciplinary field of study that investigates the role of light in the functioning of living organisms.

28 Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Michael Persinger, *Neurophysiological Bases of God Beliefs* (New York, Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1987); Scott Atran, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Boyer, *Religion Explained* (see note 19).

29 Scheler *On the Eternal in Man* (see note 25), 173–332.

30 Otto Gründler, *Elemente zur einer Religionsphilosophie auf phänomenologischer Grundlage* (Munich: Verlag Josef Koesel & Friedrich Pustet K.-G., 1922).

nally through a physiological and cognitive response, but by finally expressing it practically through our behavior. Though the findings in neurobiology and evolutionary sciences add to the understanding of the complexities of the origins of spirituality and religion, it can never curtail the understanding needed for the humanistic understanding, as in *Geisteswissenschaften*, in particular, the phenomenology of Scheler and Gründler. *Homo sapiens* is a human genus marked by its complex reciprocal understanding of literal and symbolic realities to which it can react in language and through meaningful actions.

Homo ludens

At heart we are not only *homo sapiens*, seeking to become wise, but we are also *homo ludens*, we learn and understand through play. When our spirit is free, we can turn life into a game and thrive.³¹ Play is a foundational part of learning and understanding.³² Children demonstrate the best example of this act: children experience the world and answer it through play, imaginative responding, and recreating; therewith creating meaningful answers. Children demonstrate this by taking what is thrown at them during the day and creating something new later through their play. They respond to their surroundings by grasping its value and reflecting it back in action. Play then, for children, is how they make sense of the world. It is inherently meaning-making on a cognitive level where creativity is a vital aspect of mastering knowledge; for in play, experiences of the day are reenacted and reimagined in order to gain understanding. Play is an artful learning process. This element of playfulness is not lost in the adult, though we normally grow out of childhood and cease imaginary play. We are taught to modify our youthful imaginations with ‘reality,’ nonetheless we retain these playful fundamental juvenile characteristics into adulthood. Society may try to teach us to grow up and incorporate the expectations of our cultural surroundings; the power of the imagination and recreation of events and their possibilities ‘it could be otherwise’ remains a central human force of learning and advancement. In the behavioral and comparative sciences this human trait has been coined as *neoteny* or juvenilization: the preservation into adulthood of certain juvenile characteris-

31 *Homo ludens* is a term used by Catholic theologian Hugo Rahner in his book, *Man at Play or Did You Ever Practice Eutrapelia?* (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), building on Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).

32 Rudolph Steiner, *Die Philosophie der Freiheit* [The Philosophy of Freedom] (1894; Dornach, Switzerland: Rudolph Steiner Verlag, 1916).

tics.³³ Our adult quest for knowledge is based then on a curiosity and playfulness that is fundamental to children and propels us throughout a lifetime on a quest to understand through reimagining previous events. The creative power to re-imagine a situation and understand that it could be otherwise fuels scientific curiosity as well as spiritual awakenings.

We are endowed to learn from experience, seek value in the multiplicities of life events, and we do this through the art of play, the recreation of other imagined scenarios of possible realities. Our quest to know is based on giving and taking, and thus is fundamentally re-creation. However, we seem stuck in the modern binary, which favors either science with a reductionist understanding of complex phenomena or the humanities in favor of rejecting any form of diminution in favor of irreducible creativity and emergent realities of human consciousness. This needs to be bridged by the concept that knowledge and learning are interactive. People's search for meaning is a social, cognitive enterprise for both the factual and fanciful; permeating each other to give birth to higher levels of insightful understanding, bearing in mind that these might not be solely explained by its elemental beginnings. Complex reciprocal understanding of literal and symbolic realities cannot be reduced to neurocognitive beginnings, though; without the synapses firing there is no higher consciousness or spiritual beliefs. The assumption that by identifying the psychophysiological correlates of creative and spiritual phenomena, does not invalidate the experience of a spiritual insight. Just as knowing how the neurochemistry works of the feeling of love, does not take away the transcendental value of love one feels for another person. Pointing to the organic origin of a belief does not by the same token disqualify it. William James has coined this reductive tendency especially in psychology and medicine as medical materialism.

Mental Health and Madness: A History

So far we have sketched some postmodern and scientific understanding of cognitive structures for religious understanding, some evolutionary theories and basic neurotheology of the brain; now it is time to fit mental health into the equation.³⁴

³³ In evolutionary and ethological biology the retention of juvenile characteristics into adulthood is called neoteny. The claim is that the child-brain is responsible for our indelible sense of curiosity and playfulness.

³⁴ Neurotheology, or spiritual neuroscience, correlates neural phenomena with subjective experiences of spirituality. See also Robert Burton, *On Being Certain: Believing You Are Right Even*

I have argued that we are evolutionary evolved *Gottsucher*, naturally endowed to look for supernatural agency and to expand life's experience with transcendental meaning. It is not a choice; we are hardwired to project an overbelief onto our sense impressions, to give meaning to a situation and respond to it accordingly. I coined this response as reciprocal value acts or re-imaginings. *How* we interpret this surplus value, *not* whether we believe something, is an important measure for mental health.

Mental health as well depends on a 'super'-natural reality that transcends the mundane psychological causalities. It is important to understand the *Werdegang*, the historical process of development between religion and mental health in order to map religion's role within the question of mental health in the current 'postmodern' state of affairs. The question is how in the twenty-first century the mental health-sickness spectrum relates to questions of spirituality and religion in general. The relationship between religiosity and depression is currently a widely studied research topic, and research studies on the influence of spirituality on overall health and coping mechanisms is growing exponentially.³⁵ The basic premise of mental health is that if we fail to find meaning in life, or don't grasp the value of our daily action, we are diagnosed as depressed. To suffer from lack of meaning in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM) is to be at the minimum melancholy, at worst dysthymic or Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD).³⁶ If getting out of bed in the morning is deprived of a 'good' reason, we do not act, more so, we cannot act. It takes intention to imagine what will happen and volition in order to summon the courage to get up and start a new day. As Plato once said, we are '*eros* creatures'; only the spirit can move us into action.³⁷ The question has been if this *eros* can be reduced to neurochemicals firing in the brain; or whether the organic state is but one mechanical element of

When You're Not (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2008).

35 Fatma Gul Cirhinlioglu and Gozde Ozdikmenli-Demir, "Religious Orientation and Its Relation to Locus of Control and Depression," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 34 (2012): 262–341; Mark M. Leach and Tetsuo Sato, "A Content Analysis of the *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* Journal: The Initial Four Years," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 5 (2013): 61–68.

36 DSM V replaces dysthymia with PDP, persistent depressive disorder, which is a chronic (more than two years) major depressive disorder. See <http://pro.psychcentral.com/2013/dsm-5-changes-depression-depressive-disorders/004259.html> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014). Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, trans. Ilse Lasch, 3rd ed. (1946; London and New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984).

37 Plato: Symposium, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/symposium.html> (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014); see also Plato, Phaedrum, <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=1636> (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

the complexity of human consciousness where the response to the world is basically a response to the value of love, an emotional response that answers through our participatory act. This love then fires up the synapses into action, as without it, one would remain in bed.

Why has there been resurgence in studies regarding the interconnectedness of religion and spirituality in mental health?³⁸ The marks of the drastic separation between religion and psychology are still noticeable. In the beginning of twentieth century it is Freud who unequivocally proclaimed religion as ‘the neurosis of mankind.’³⁹ Though Freud and his work are presently mostly rejected as unscientific and un-falsifiable, his legacy of psychological atheism lives on, strengthened by a scientific infatuation with behaviorism. Though scientists such as George Vetter and B. F. Skinner emphatically rejected psychoanalysis and any concept of internal workings of the mind, they too reduced religion to be a mere reinforced habit of superstition.⁴⁰ Recently and most famously, the ‘new atheists’ proclaim that religion should not be tolerated and ought to be condemned. Phrases such as ‘The End of Faith,’ ‘The God Delusion,’ and ‘God is not great: how religion poisons everything,’ repeat Freud’s religious denunciation.⁴¹ But the anti-religious trend may have run its course.

William James did not directly disagree with the irrational aspect of the religious experience; however, he realized it might take the genius of a ‘psychopathic temperament’⁴² to forge the moral perception. Sane or insane, rationality or irrationality should not be the judge of the fruits of experience. Religion should not be refereed by its neurology or its mental state, but solely by its fruits. This is at

38 The Division 36 of the American Psychological Association (APA) was launched in 1976 under the title of ‘Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues’ (PIRI), first started by the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA) in 1946. In 1993 the division was renamed ‘Psychology of Religion.’ In 2008 it changed its name again to reflect the growing importance of research into spirituality and is currently called ‘Psychology of Religion and Spirituality.’ See <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-36/index.aspx> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

39 Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: H. Liveright, 1928); id., *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961).

40 George Vetter, *Magic and Religions: Their Psychological Nature, Origin, and Function* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958); B.F. Skinner, “‘Superstition’ in the Pigeon,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 38 (1948): 168–72.

41 Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2005); Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006); Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2007).

42 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study on Human Nature* (1902; New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co./Penguin Group, 1990), 30.

the heart of William James's thesis explored in his famous work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. What are the psychological effects of a religious belief? That is all that should matter, and today's research seems to agree with this pragmatic proposition. What are the health benefits of spiritual and religious belief? James goes further still and coined the term overbelief, articulating the insight that scientific factual evidence is never sufficient for complex understanding.⁴³ The question for James was: do you include or exclude the religious experience when it comes to mental health? He postulated the existential need for the interface of spirituality and mental health. James and Freud each bridge the divide when it comes to this question of religion, science, and mental health.

So what does it mean that James did not dispute Freud's definition of psychopathology of religion? He even speaks of the *sick soul*, the morbid-minded psyche that maximizes evil. He agrees that certain temperaments, certain sick, weak, and insecure people need religion for the sake of the survival of their own struggle to save their soul. But he does not judge it. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is founded on this Jamesian principle. The second step of the AA doctrine reads: 'Come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.'⁴⁴ The sick soul realizes evil exists, but that it needs help from beyond the self, 'something greater than ourselves.' James claims that only with this realization can salvation (maybe) be found. And this salvation translates in mental health for James as a dire necessity, for without it, one is emotionally lost. It is this overbelief that can transcend depression, substance abuse, psychopathology; it is spirituality and the religious experience that restores a sense of sanity as it provides a new and redeeming purpose.

James stated in 1901 that the religious experience, however diagnosed in the medical mind, and however reducible to a 'psychopathic temperament,' should not be reduced merely to its organic state. In his first chapter on Religion & Neurology, James writes:

'Medical materialism seems indeed a good appellation for the too simple-minded system of thought which . . . finishes up Saint Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic. It snuffs out Saint Teresa as an hysteric, Saint Francis of Assisi as an hereditary degenerate. . . .'⁴⁵

⁴³ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 458–59: "our transmarginal consciousness carries us if we follow it on tis remoter side. Here the overbeliefs begin: here mysticism and the conversion rapture... the religious question is primarily a questions of life, of living or not living."

⁴⁴ The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics World Service Inc.; available at http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/smf-121_en.pdf (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

⁴⁵ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 20–21.

James claims that ‘there is no single one of our states of mind, high or low, healthy or morbid, that has not some organic process as its condition.’⁴⁶ Medical materialism is the term he coined to speak out against the reductionist spirit of his time in the scientific world he knew too well at Harvard.

James wanted to include the religious, however one may define it, but had to wait until a surprising ally took up the gauntlet. It seems that not until the sociobiologist Edward Wilson in 1978 was this issue of scientific reductionism again addressed so cogently, in connection with Aristotle’s merging of reasoning and art. In *On Human Nature*, Wilson states that yes, the heart of the scientific method is in the reduction of observed phenomenon to testable principles, but that no, this is not the whole process. ‘The remainder consists of the reconstruction of complexity by an expanding synthesis under the control of laws newly demonstrated by analysis.’⁴⁷ So, reconstructing the complexity of the natural and spiritual world is at stake, contemporary Jameson’s would argue. The novel religious experience emerging on a higher level of observable cognitive neurological working of the mind should be taken seriously and cannot be argued away just by claiming it does not exist on an organic level. ‘The appearance is that in this phenomenon something . . . actually exerts an influence, idea raises our center of personal energy, and produces regenerative effects unattainable in other ways.’⁴⁸

But Freud’s voice rings louder at first. Freud famously proclaimed that religion and science are mortal enemies where belief in a God is a sign of obsessive neurosis, narcissistic, and an infantile delusional mindset.⁴⁹ Freud initially won the argument, silencing religion in the scientific world and thus that of mental health. It was Freud’s foremost goal to ally psychiatry and psychology with science, as, for him, it was the power of his god Logos that would eventually triumph over the illusionary hold of religion:

Even purified religious ideas cannot escape this fate, so long as they try to preserve anything of the consolation of religion. No doubt if they confine themselves to a belief in a higher spiritual being, whose qualities are indefinable and whose purposes cannot be discerned, they be proof against the challenge of science; but then they will also lose their hold on human interest.⁵⁰

46 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 21.

47 Wilson, *On Human Nature* (see note 18), 11.

48 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 467.

49 Sigmund Freud discusses these concepts at length both in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927; New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961); *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961).

50 Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (see note 49), 69.

Religion features cases of cognitive incoherence, catatonia, delusion, magical thinking, hallucinations, and schizotypal disorders according to the early editions of this *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.⁵¹ The religious experience is one of psychopathology; this can be clearly documented. Religion can be identified as a form of a benign expression of superstition such as B. F. Skinner's famous superstitious pigeon experiment in the 40s⁵², to a neurotic fixation on sin and wrongdoing.⁵³ 'Scrupulosity,' first coined by John Moore in the seventeenth century to describe those of 'religious melancholy,' is now an official disorder to describe pathological guilt over religious and moral issues. This technical term is categorized among the anxiety disorders of 'Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders' (OCD): In 1980, Albert Ellis famously summed up the antireligious view of mental health: "the less religious (patients) are, the more emotionally healthy they will tend to be."⁵⁴

The phenomenon of religion as the core of societal ill is still prominent today, as already argued. Religious beliefs are seen at the core of evil actions and war in this world. The institution of religion in particular is inherently blamed. This argument turns Durkheim's thesis on its head where religion forms one of the core institutions of society that connects people to society and each other. Those who are angry about religion will point to the many things that have been done in the name of a God over the ages; or even recently (April 15, 2013) with what happened in Boston: two young men were inspired by their religion to injure as many civilians as possible at the marathon.⁵⁵ Just get rid of religion, they argue, and we can live in secular peace and atheistic tranquility.⁵⁶ Get rid of religion altogether

51 Jeffrey Levin, "Religion and Mental Health: Theory and Research," *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 7 (2010): 102–15.

52 Skinner, "'Superstition' in the Pigeon" (see note 40).

53 Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (see note 49); George Vetter, *Magic and Religion* (see note 40); B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

54 A. Ellis, "Psychotherapy and Atheistic Values: A Response to A. E. Bergin's "Psychotherapy and Religious Issues,"" *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 48 (1980): 637.

55 Dwight Longenecker, "Did Religion Motivate the Boston Bombers," *Washington Post* April 29, 2013. Available at <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2013/04/29/did-religion-motivate-the-boston-bombers/15438> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2014).

56 Examples are plentiful: in 1978 Jim Jones and the suicide of 913 of his followers; clergy abuse; victims of child sexual abuse; Michael Bray and abortion clinic bombings 1985; World Trade Center Bombing 1993; Baruch Goldstein's attack on the Tomb of the Patriarch 1994; Yitzhak Rabin's assassination 1995; 9/11; etc. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (2001; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 19–80.

and the world's core problems will be solved. There is definitely a dark side to religion and it is well documented.⁵⁷

However, Ellis had to retract his words. By the later part of the 1980's the suspicion of religion abated. The dominance of psychoanalysis and behaviorism were replaced with new findings in learning theories, ethology and experimental approaches in the laboratory on theories of behavior. The efficacy of prayer and meditation began to be examined in clinical research studies, and the reduction in stress and beneficial physiological changes indicated a power of the mind over the body.⁵⁸ Positive research finding become evident in the advancement of technology in the field of neuroscience (just think of the PET scans and the fMRI imaging) and the growing interest in consciousness studies sustained the increase in research on the positive role of religion and health.⁵⁹ A new awareness emerges: religion and spirituality are now also viewed as psychotherapeutic tools. The *DSM-IV* in 1994 and *DSM-IV-TR* (text revision) in 2000 came out acknowledging religious and spiritual difficulties as a distinct mental disorder deserving treatment rather than eradication. Although the psychiatric and psychological profession remained dubious not only because they were and are the first responders when religious practice take destructive form, but also because psychiatrists and especially psychologist self-select on basis of irreligion. James H. Leuba who was a sociologist at Bryn Mawr College, has sampled as early as in

57 Morris Cohen, "The Dark Side of Religion," *The Faith of a Liberal: Selected Essays* (New York: Henry Holt, 1946), 337–61; Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1926); Theodor Adorno, E. Frankel-Brunswik, D. Levinson, and R. Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950); G. W. Allport, "Religion and Prejudice," *Crane Review* 2 (1959): 1–10; G. W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (1966): 447–57; C. Bagley and R. Boshier, "The Orthogonality of Religious and Racist/Punitive Attitudes in Three Societies," *Journal of Social Psychology* 92 (1974): 173–79; Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); C. Daniel Batson, Patricia Schoenrade, and W. Larry Ventis, *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); B. Hunsberger and L. Jackson, "Religion, Meaning, and Prejudice," *Journal of Social Issues* 61 (2005): 807–26; Kelly Murray and Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, "The Dark Side of Religion, Spirituality and the Moral Emotions: Shame, Guilt, and Negative Religiosity as Markers for Life Dissatisfaction," *Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 42 (2007): 22–41.

58 One example is the presence of hundreds of scientific research studies on the effect of transcendental meditation (TM).

59 Positron emission tomography (PET) is a nuclear medical imaging technique; and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) of the brain registers blood flow as a measure of brain activity.

1914 and again in 1934 American men of science and found psychologists least likely to believe in a personal God, immortality, or an afterlife.⁶⁰

James speaks of the healthy-minded and the sick soul.⁶¹ Jung, Fromm, and later Maslow take up the positive inquiry into the psychology of religion, and eventually transformed the phenomenological, descriptive German tradition of Gründler and Scheler into the American humanistic synthesis.

In spite of psychology's irreligious history, James's positive view of religious expression endured. James realized the problem from the start. For a scientist, it is hard to see the benefits of religion. James addressed the schism first between science and religion, the naturalist and the super-naturalist, and claimed it is the latter, the super-naturalist, who 'muddles disparate dimensions of existence.'⁶² The world of ideals, of spiritual power and religious thinking has no 'efficient causality.' Where Freud tried to live in the world of science informed by 'just the facts,' James realized that a life worth living requires an overbelief where the ideal world, the meaning of facts, the reconstruction of complexity if you will in Wilson's sense, brings that extra dimension, mental health, that comes only with the experience of the surplus value of life of reciprocal re-imagining.

The Current Debate: Spiritual but not Religious

Spirituality and religion are essential components of human functioning. Religion is a three dimensional response to life as it relates to the *numinous*, a neologism expressing the spiritual experience of encountering the divine.⁶³ And here lies the crux of the present debate, the elephant in the room: what does one mean by the numinous? What is spirituality? The challenge today is the emergence of a new, postmodern concept of spirituality. The term 'numinous' was first coined by Rudolph Otto as a transcendental concept for the holy,⁶⁴ but I use the term

⁶⁰ In 1934, Leuba found psychologists in his samples of American scientists less likely to believe in God and immortality than any of the other groups of scientists. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion* (see note 11), 16. See also <https://www.americanscientist.org/issues/issue.aspx?id=3747&y=0&no=&content=true&page=2&css=print> (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

⁶¹ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 77–154.

⁶² James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 464.

⁶³ From the Latin *numen* introduced by Rudolf Otto and expanded by Erik Erikson 'numinous' and C. G. Jung 'numinosum.'

⁶⁴ Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. J. W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923; 2nd ed., 1950). This term is also used by C. G. Jung and Erik Erikson.

here more in Scheler's sense of the reciprocal response to the 'idea of the good,' the personal sense of the divine in the widest sense; that which transcends the pure physicality of existence. Spirituality is the potential immanent concept of the non-material dimension of existence.⁶⁵

Ever more people self-identify as 'spiritual but not religious.' In the past, spirituality was an inherent form of being religious. It was the gift to those who labored long years practicing their belief structures with the hope to become eventually filled with the Holy Spirit, spiritual. 'Developing a spiritual life requires deliberate effort, just as other practices do.'⁶⁶ However, language evolves and connotations of words change. In the last thirty years or so there has been a marked shift in the use of this word 'spiritual,' symptomatic I believe of the changing landscape of the religious discourse at large. "I am spiritual but not religious" has inspired scientific discussion called by some scholars as the "spiritual turn," or even a "spiritual revolution."⁶⁷ But is the term 'spirituality' actually a scientific concept? Professor emeritus of Psychology, Bernard Spilka in 1993 famously said: "spirituality (as a term) is so 'fuzzy' that it has become 'a word that embraces obscurity with passion.'"⁶⁸ Nonetheless, twenty years later the semantics of spirituality and related self-identifications remain crucial.

What would the modern or even postmodern wording be of religious traits? How does psychology map this religious sentiment? A recent review article by the Boston University psychologist Catherine Caldwell-Harris published findings on the question: who is an atheist? She starts out to reassure those who are atheists that they are not abnormal. From an evolutionary perspective it is rare, but nowadays with the current low threat environment, it is adaptive.

In her article "Understanding Atheism/Non-Belief as an Expected Individual-Difference Variable,"⁶⁹ she illuminates the opposite side of James's concept of the sick soul, those whose souls are 'based on the persuasion that the evil aspects

⁶⁵ Spiritual comes from *spiritus*, Latin for breath; also well known as in *Spiritus Sanctus*, the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁶ Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 178.

⁶⁷ B. Keller, C. Klein, A. Swahajor-Biesemann, C. Silver, R. Hood, and H. Streib, "The Semantics of 'Spirituality' and Related Self-Identifications: A Comparative Study in Germany and the USA," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 35 (2013): 71–100.

⁶⁸ Ralph Hood, Peter Hill, Jr., and Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*, 4th ed. (1985; New York: Guilford Press, 2009), 8.

⁶⁹ Catherine Caldwell-Harris, "Understanding Atheism/Non-belief as an Expected Individual-Differences Variable," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 2 (2012): 4–23.

of our life are of its very essence.⁷⁰ Though for James the healthy-minded are not devoid of the religious sentiment, they have a way of deliberately minimizing evil. Caldwell-Harris corroborates this insight.

Atheists and non-believers are not amoral per se, and can even have moral concerns, but their cognitive style is distinctly different. Their personality traits mark them as less social, more individualistic, and non-conformist. As a learning style they prefer rational reasoning and logic over intuition; they tend to be skeptics and reject supernaturalism. She goes on to conclude that atheists are predominately white males, living in urban settings, with high socioeconomic background, who are well educated, and have low social obligation. There seems to be a strong correlation between the personality of internal locus of control and a rejection of the dominant culture. Vassilis Saroglou, professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain, argues in his 2009 meta-analysis of *Religiousness as a Cultural Adaption of Basic Traits*, that individual differences in religiousness can be partly explained as a cultural adaptation of agreeableness and conscientiousness, two personality traits.⁷¹ Religiosity tends to co-occur with low self-direction, low hedonism, and low achievement/power. Religion in other words co-occurs with values of tradition and conformity in contrast to the findings by Caldwell-Harris of extraversion and openness to experience in atheist/non-believers.

However, the claim that the term atheist is the same as non-believer is erroneous. Atheism is a belief form just on the other side of the spectrum of theism. Atheism is no more rational or scientific than any other belief form. It just postulates a negative; there is no God, no higher being, or transcendental reality. This too is a statement of faith, as it addresses the fundamental question of philosophy; why is there something and not nothing? We don't know. We can wager belief statements, but that is all it is: a claim about a reality of which we have no direct knowledge. We can only make surplus statements about this reality.⁷²

Recent empirical evidence supports a generally protective effect of religious involvement.⁷³ Psychodynamic explanations of personality styles suggest the tendency of religious beliefs to “give rise to () engendering greater peacefulness, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose, or alternatively, guilt, depression, and

70 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 124.

71 Vassilis Saroglou, “Religiousness as a Cultural Adaption of Basic Traits: A Five-Factor Model Perspective,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (2009): 108–25.

72 Edward Remler, *Do Science and Rationality Support Atheism?*; available at http://www.merca-tornet.com/articles/view/do_science_and_rationality_support_atheism (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

73 Levin, “Religion and Mental Health” (see note 51), 16.

self-doubt.⁷⁴ Religion is a necessary core institution we need in society to remain healthy individuals. Religion is not a question of psychopathology. On the contrary, religion can be psychotherapeutic. We need religion to make sense of this world and the data suggests that especially men who are fifty and above have a lot to gain.⁷⁵ But to be inclusive, we all need more religion, or rather faith, not less. The big million-dollar question however is: What kind of religion and how do we harness the power of religion constructively and not blow ourselves up in the mean time?

Conclusion

How we believe, not *what* we believe, is the important measure for mental health. Mental health has everything to do with our belief system. We are not just scientists of the here and now, who want to explain and understand each experience for itself. We are also cognitive framers of the larger parameters; god-seekers, filled with wonder and awe, with questions of future projections where gods and goblins, faith and spirituality take their shape. Atheists are not non-believers; merely frame their overbeliefs as immanent realities of the here and now. They seek to understand consciousness and the subliminal self through the power of logic. Doesn't this hark back to Freud's god Logos? If we all just grow up to accept reality as it really is and just believe hard enough in the paradigm of science, we will be saved.⁷⁶

As play is natural for a child, meaning making is human daily business, and includes radical decisions of what is important and what has value.⁷⁷ *Homo ludens* endow us to become *homo sapiens*; our wisdom gained from incorporating science and art, reasoning, and religion. What is this so-called human need for the religious act, the human need to realize an overbelief, something that fills life with meaning and purpose?⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Levin, "Religion and Mental Health" (see note 51), 14–15.

⁷⁵ Centers for Disease Control, "Suicide among Adults Aged 35–64—United States, 1999–2010," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* May 3, 2013. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6217a1.htm?s_cid=mm6217a1_w (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2014).

⁷⁶ Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (see note 49), 68–71.

⁷⁷ See also Rene Proyer and Frank A. Rodden, "Is the Homo Ludens Cheerful and Serious at the Same Time? An Empirical Study of Hugo Rahner's Notion of Ernsttheiterkeit," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 35 (2013): 213–31.

⁷⁸ Hugo Rahner, Review of *Man at Play or Did You Ever Practice Eutrapelia?*, *An Irish Quarterly Review* 54 (1965): 270–73.

Religion relates to spirituality and the neurocognitive capacity for belief as a structure of the mind; our human ability to imagine and create the social-cognitive attribution of agency. My point here is the necessity of the human mind for meaning making. This is an important point: nones or nuns: we all believe in something. What this something is, that is the question.

Context matters. We are born into a system of meaning, which is called culture, environment, and language. However, the creative spontaneity of reacting to the world holds a surplus value not coded for in our DNA or genes, and which can neither be reduced to the environment. It is this mix that the current scientific paradigm of the *biopsychosocial*⁷⁹ model describes up to a point, but misses a crucial link. The triangle of genes, the environment, and the psychological reaction captures the cognitive structures of the brain only up to a point. There is a need for a systemized theory that can include the reciprocity of human behavior, can explain why the whole is so much more than its separate parts.⁸⁰ This is what lies at the heart of the religious act, an overbelief, a conceptual framework that each of us has, and which is our most interesting and valuable aspect.⁸¹ We all assess the value of the reciprocal relationship between ourselves and the world and act accordingly. I will call this reciprocal response the religious act. “No one can avoid performing the religious act,” according to Max Scheler (1874–1928), because it is the “essential endowment of the human mind.”⁸² We are god-seekers by nature. What differs in each of us is the object we value. We decide in our lives what constitutes this god-quality, this overbelief that gives meaning to our encounters and motivates us to act. In our postmodern world these choices are complex, but always value-laden. As John Haught put it in *God After Darwin*, in the context of evolutionary science:

All scientists have at least an implicit metaphysics. Every scientific idea is presented against the backdrop of general assumptions about the nature of reality (which is what “metaphysics is all about).⁸³

79 The scientific paradigm that recognizes that biological, psychological and social factors together shape behavior.

80 Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *Robots, Men and Minds: Psychology in the Modern World* (New York: George Braziller, 1967).

81 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see note 42), 458–60. He coined the term overbelief in the context of transmarginal consciousness and mysticism. Overbelief always tells us that the finite self rejoins the absolute self, for it was always one with God and identical with the soul of the world.

82 Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man* (see note 25), 246–332.

83 John Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 82.

Haught goes on to speak of the metaphysics of the future, that which pulls us towards meaning that is unfolding, and I would add, through the meaning we encounter in the world and respond to in our daily actions. We all hold a metaphysical canvas, a backdrop and future projection of a general vision of reality that we each hold to be true. What we do with this truth is what dictates our actions. In the postmodern world mental health needs to be assessed in the context of each individual's overbelief beyond that which is offered by the reductive sciences. Medical materialism may be right, but does not hold the whole truth. Nones or nuns, we all have faith in what we believe, as it is our overbelief in the end that keeps us sane.

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